MARVEL
THE FINAL ISSUE OF
CONAN THE BARBARIAN
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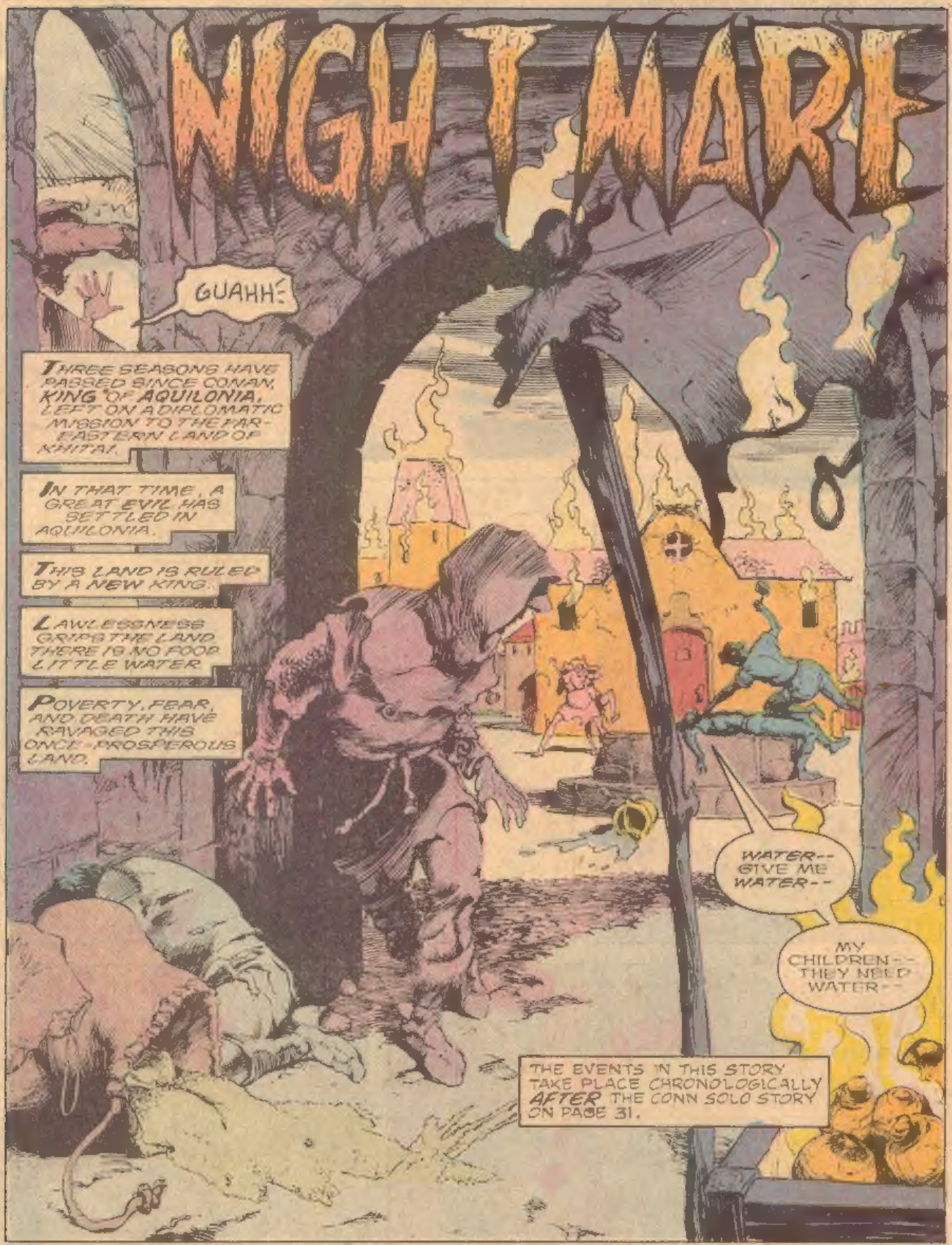
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WHO SAYS CONAN HAS TO SURVIVE?

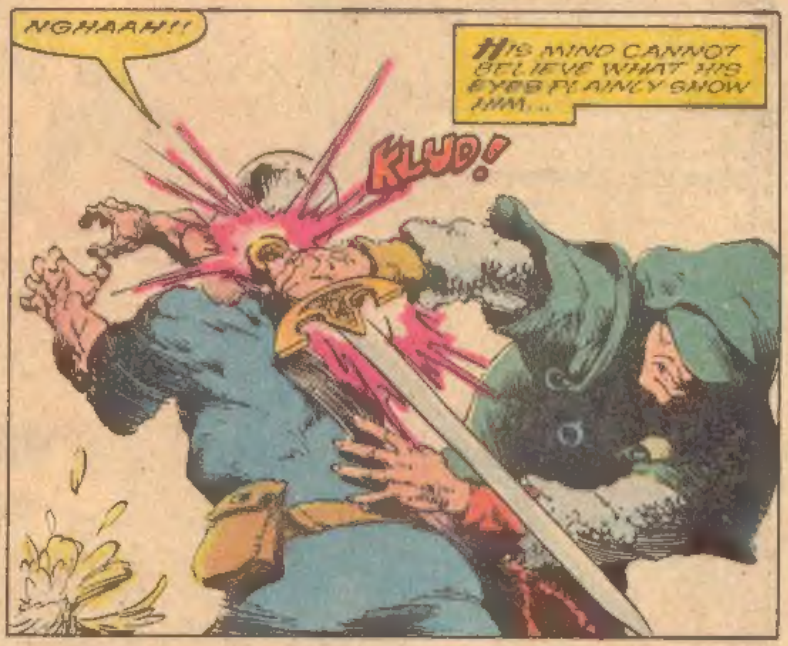

NIGHTMARE
GUAHH!
THREE SEASONS HAVE PASSED SINCE CONAN, KING OF AQUILONIA, LEFT ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO THE FAR-EASTERN LAND OF KHITAI.
IN THAT TIME, A GREAT EVIL HAS SETTLED IN AQUILONIA.
THIS LAND IS RULED BY A NEW KING.
LAWLESSNESS GRIPS THE LAND. THERE IS NO FOOD. LITTLE WATER.
POVERTY, FEAR, AND DEATH HAVE RAVAGED THIS ONCE-PROSPEROUS LAND.
WATER-- GIVE ME WATER--
MY CHILDREN-- THEY NEED WATER--
THE EVENTS IN THIS STORY TAKE PLACE CHRONOLOGICALLY AFTER THE CONN SOLO STORY ON PAGE 31.

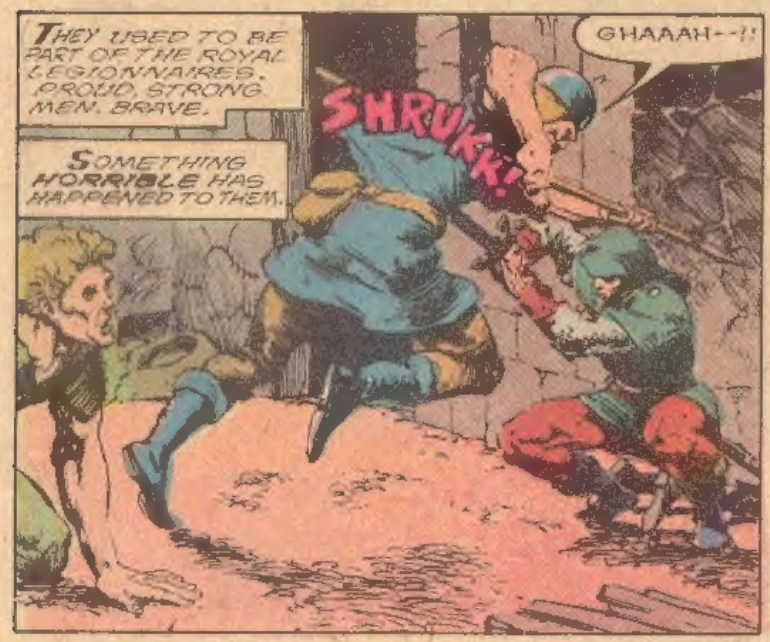
JAMES OWSLEY STORY • GEOF ISHERWOOD ART • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORS • DON DALEY EDITOR • TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

CONAN THE KING ™ **Vol. 1, No. 56, November, 1989.** (U.S.P.S. 689-610) Published by MARVEL COMICS. James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President. Marion Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published bi-monthly. Copyright © 1989 by Conan Properties, Inc. CONAN THE KING (including all prominent characters featured in this issue) and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Conan Properties, Inc. All advertising and editorial matter © copyright © 1989 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.50 per copy in the U.S. and $2.00 in Canada. Subscription rate $18.00 for 12 issues. Canada and foreign, $20.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO SUBSCRIPTION DEPARTMENT, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**

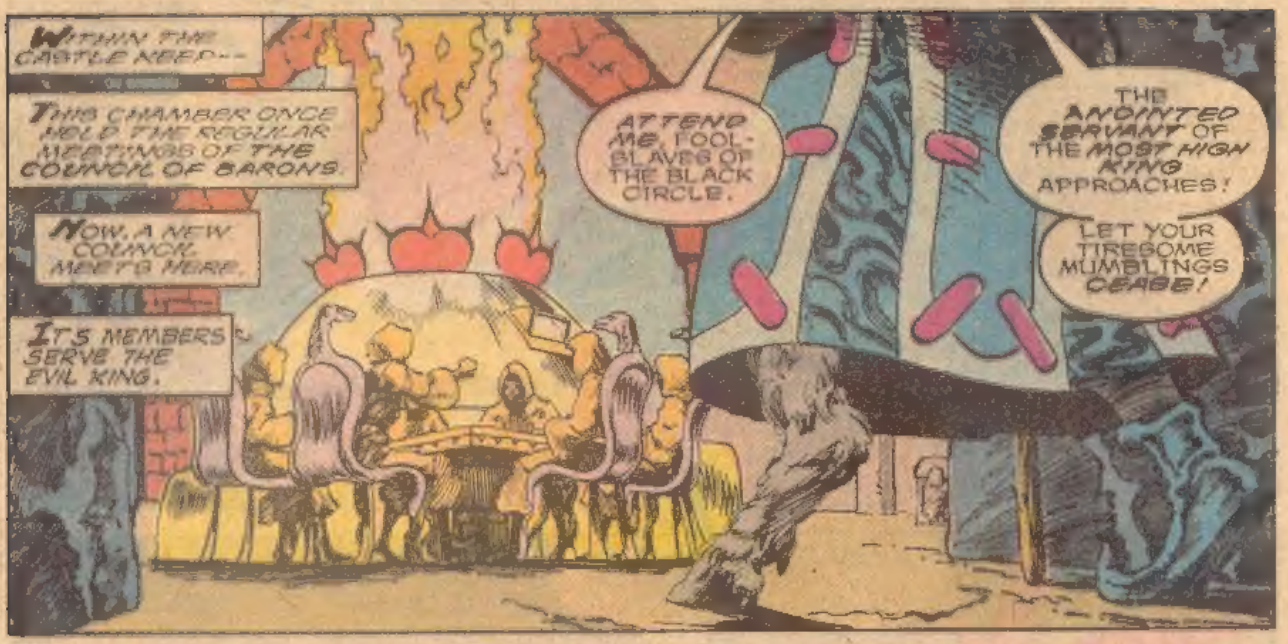
IT HAS BEEN A VERY VERY LONG TIME SINCE THIS STRANGER WALKED THESE LANDS.
HE WAS BORN HERE.
SEE HERE, MAN, ARE YOU MAD?! YOU CANNOT KILL THIS CHICKEN!!
B-BUT MY FAMILY IS STARVING--

SO? THIS IS THE KING'S CHICKEN!


NGHAAAH!!
HIS MIND CANNOT BELIEVE WHAT HIS EYES PLAINLY SHOW HIM...
KLUD!


THEY USED TO BE PART OF THE ROYAL LEGIONNAIRES. PROUD, STRONG MEN. BRAVE.
SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAS HAPPENED TO THEM.
GHAAAH--!!
SHRUKK!

THE STRANGER INTENDS TO FIND OUT JUST WHAT THAT SOMETHING IS.


WITHIN THE CASTLE KEEP--
THIS CHAMBER ONCE HOLD THE REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF BARONS.
NOW, A NEW COUNCIL MEETS HERE.
IT'S MEMBERS SERVE THE EVIL KING.
ATTEND ME, FOOL-SLAVES OF THE BLACK CIRCLE.
THE ANOINTED SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH KING APPROACHES!
LET YOUR TIRESOME MUMBLINGS CEASE!

HOW I WEARY OF YOU, BOY.
LO, THESE MANY SEASONS HAVE WE BEEN MADE TO SUFFER YOUR TIRESOME PRESENCE.

MIND YOUR TONGUE, JACKAL. 'TIS THE ANOINTED ONE WHOM YOU DO ADDRESS.

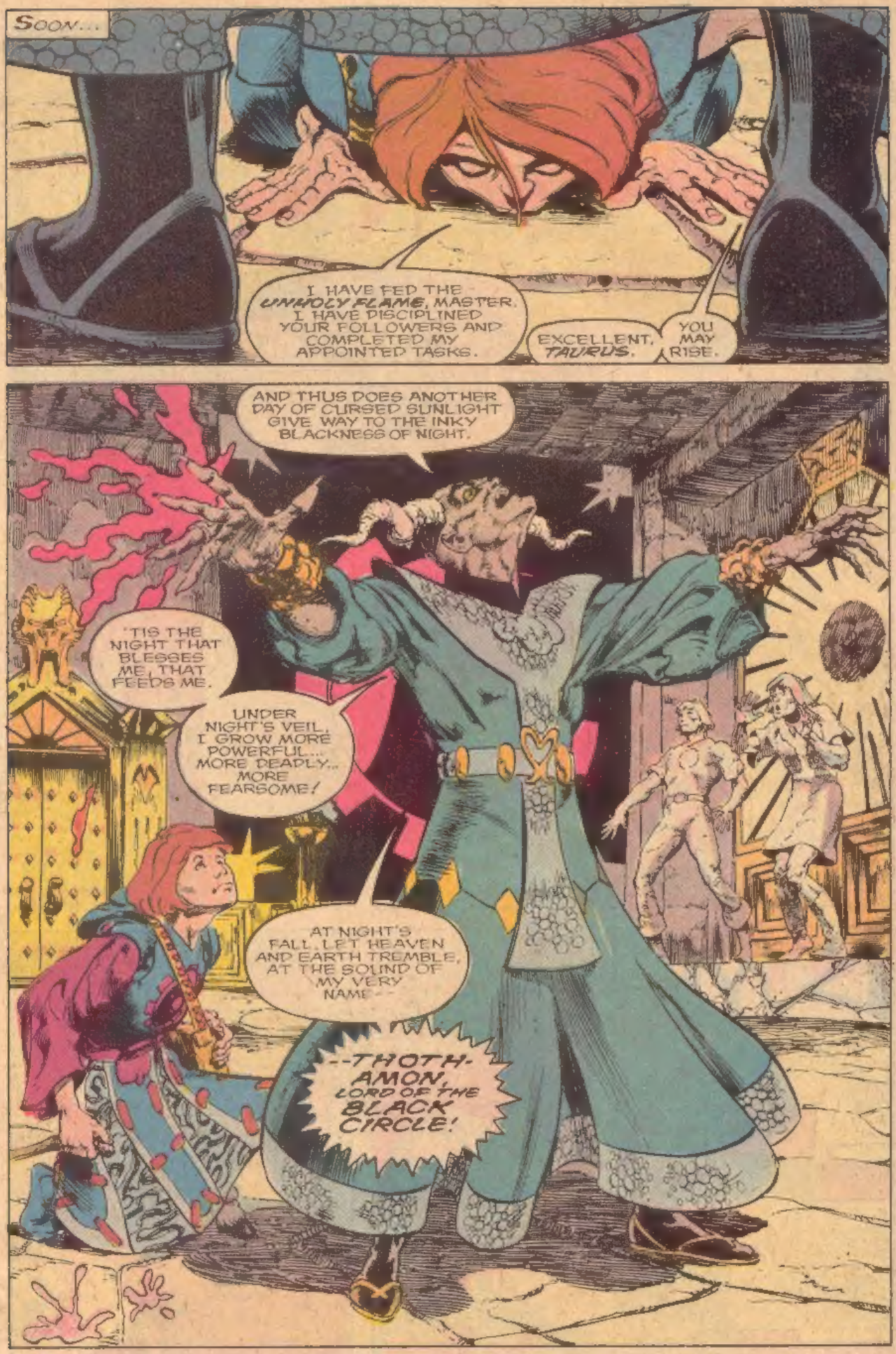
YOU ARE MERELY A SLAVE, AS ARE WE ALL.
I SHALL STOMACH NO MORE OF YOUR BRASH MORTAL INSOLENCE--

YOU, ZEMBALOU--
--SHALL NOT STOMACH ANYTHING EVER AGAIN.
BY... SET...
WAIT!HIS!

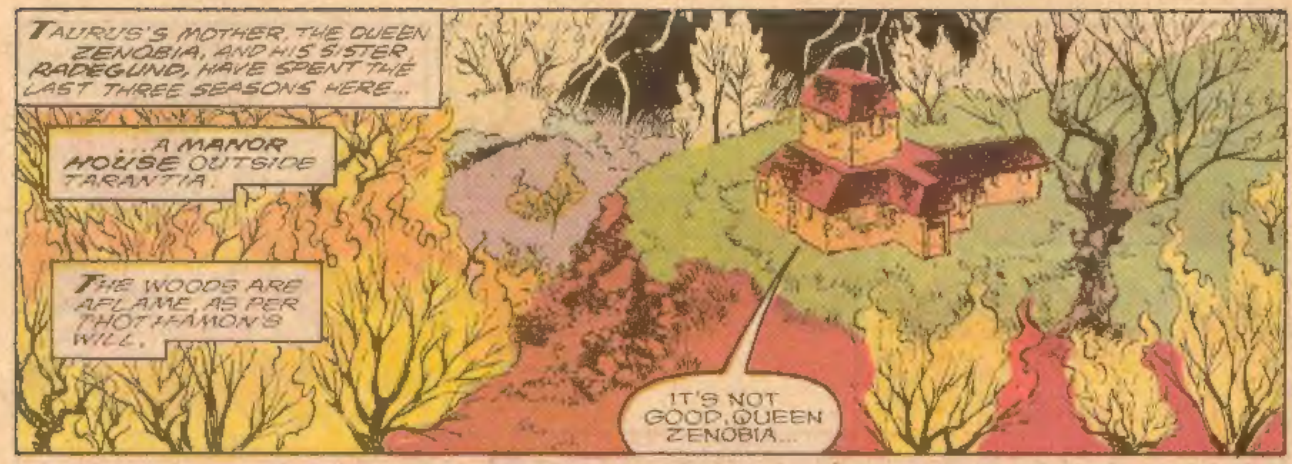
ARE THERE ANY OTHER OBJECTIONS?
THE BOY WHISPERS A SPELL AS HE SPRINKLES THE DRIED BLOOD OF MARTYRS INTO THE ELDRITCH FLAME.

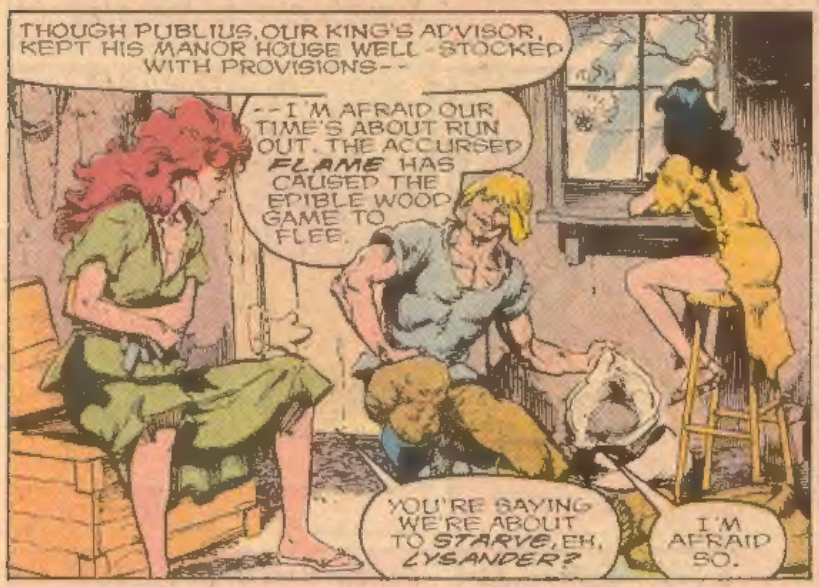
KNOW YE THIS, WIZARDS:
I AM THE FIRST SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH KING, I--
--TAURUS.

NO MAN MAY APPROACH THE KING EXCEPT BY ME. I AM HIS VOICE AND HIS WILL.
CHALLENGE ME AT YOUR PERIL.


SOON...
I HAVE FED THE UNHOLY FLAME, MASTER. I HAVE DISCIPLINED YOUR FOLLOWERS AND COMPLETED MY APPOINTED TASKS.
EXCELLENT, TAURUS.
YOU MAY RISE.
AND THUS DOES ANOTHER DAY OF CURSED SUNLIGHT GIVE WAY TO THE INKY BLACKNESS OF NIGHT.
'TIS THE NIGHT THAT BLESSES ME, THAT FEEDS ME.
UNDER NIGHT'S VEIL, I GROW MORE POWERFUL... MORE DEADLY... MORE FEARSOME!
AT NIGHT'S FALL, LET HEAVEN AND EARTH TREMBLE, AT THE SOUND OF MY VERY NAME--
--THOTH-AMON, LORD OF THE BLACK CIRCLE!

I HAVE CONQUERED CONAN, MY MOST HATED ENEMY, AND HIS STOLEN LANDS.
I HAVE MADE HIS SON, TAURUS, MY FOOTSLAVE.
A PILLAR OF ELDRITCH FLAME FEEDS THE FIRE THAT PERPETUALLY ENGULFS THE CROWN CITY. THE FLAME FEEDS MY OWN ENERGIES AND MULTIPLIES THEM.
THE FOOL BARON MALORIC AND CONN, AQUILONIA'S CROWN PRINCE, ARE BOTH DEAD, EMBALMED WITHIN STONE FOR MY PLEASURE.
NOW I AWAIT ONLY MY HATED ENEMY'S RETURN.
AND WITH CONAN'S RETURN SHALL COME MY MOST COMPLETE VICTORY.
TAURUS DOES NOT SERVE THE KING OF HIS OWN VOLITION.
THOTH-AMON HAS SPARED THE LIVES OF TAURUS'S MOTHER AND SISTER SO LONG AS TAURUS CONTINUES TO SERVE HIM.
THUS, TAURUS DOES AS HE'S TOLD AND HOPES FOR HIS FATHER'S SWIFT RETURN--


TAURUS'S MOTHER, THE QUEEN ZENOBIA, AND HIS SISTER RADEGUND, HAVE SPENT THE LAST THREE SEASONS HERE...
...A MANOR HOUSE OUTSIDE TARANTIA.
THE WOODS ARE AFLAME, AS PER THOTH-AMON'S WILL.
IT'S NOT GOOD, QUEEN ZENOBIA...

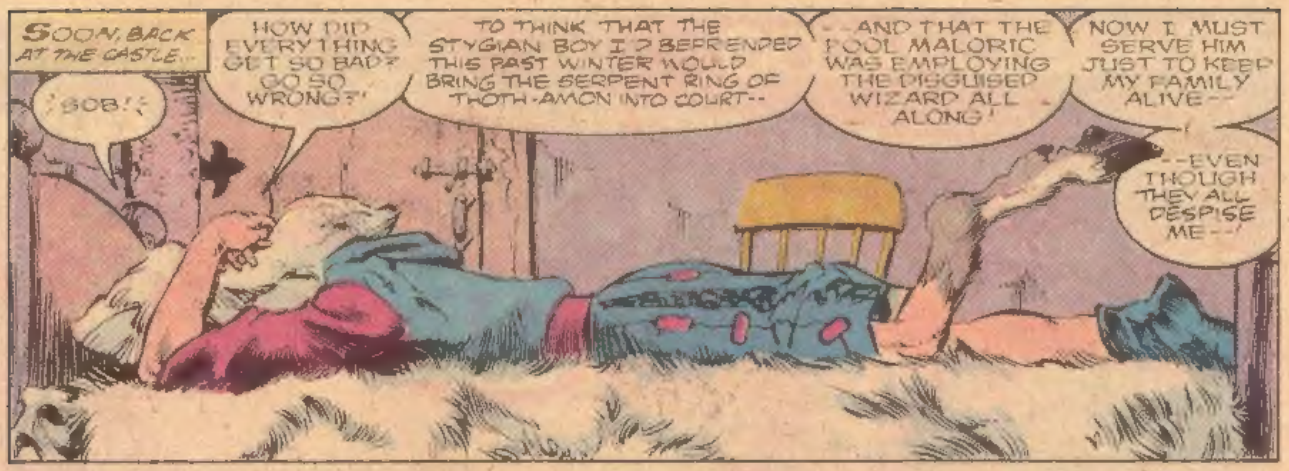

THOUGH PUBLIUS, OUR KING'S ADVISOR, KEPT HIS MANOR HOUSE WELL-STOCKED WITH PROVISIONS--
--I'M AFRAID OUR TIME'S ABOUT RUN OUT. THE ACCURSED FLAME HAS CAUSED THE EDIBLE WOOD GAME TO FLEE.
YOU'RE SAYING WE'RE ABOUT TO STARVE, EH, LYSANDER?
I'M AFRAID SO.

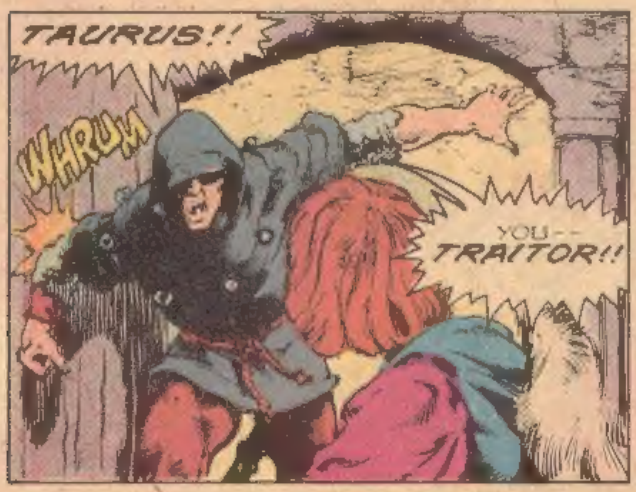
THOTH-AMON'S ENCHANTMENT PROHIBITS US FROM LEAVING TARANTIA, M'LADY. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND--
I DON'T BELIEVE IT--
RADEGUND, DAUGHTER TO THE DEPOSED KING, HAS WAITED LONG AND WISTFULLY FOR THIS MANOR HOUSE'S SINGLE OCCUPANT TO RETURN.

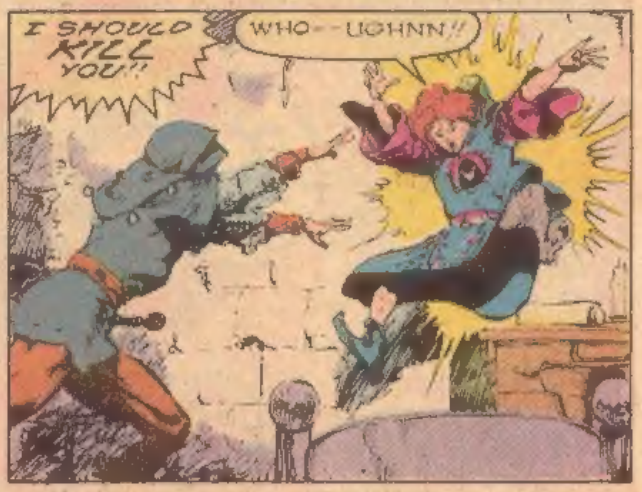
HE'S BEEN MISSING EVER SINCE THIS TROUBLE BEGAN. SHE'D FEARED HIM DEAD.
THE MAN SHE LOVES.
THE BLACK DRAGON NAMED LEONIDAS.

RADEGUND--
Q-QUEEN ZENOBIA, LYSANDER...
...WHY ARE YOU HERE AT MY FATHER'S HOUSE?
WE COULDN'T MAKE IT THROUGH THE WOODS, BOY, AND WE SURE AS BLAZES WEREN'T GOING TO RETURN TO THE CASTLE.
HOW DID YOU--
I LEFT AS SOON AS THE GREAT EVIL ARRIVED. I FLED TO WARN OUR LORD BEFORE THE WOODS BECAME UNPASSABLE

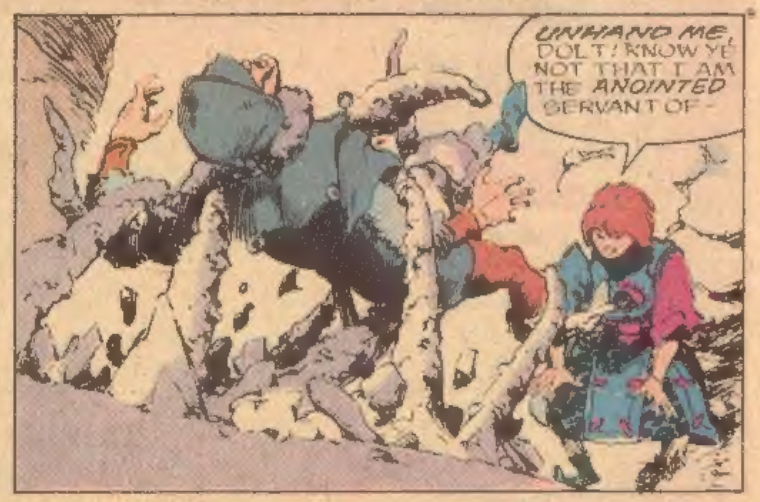
IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO COME IN, THOUGH.
I'VE FOUND OUR LIEGE, AND NOW I'VE RETURNED TO FETCH MY UNIFORM.
WE MEN SHOULD RETURN TO THE CASTLE AT ONCE.


SOON, BACK AT THE CASTLE...
HOW DID EVERYTHING GET SO BAD? GO SO WRONG?
TO THINK THAT THE STYGIAN BOY I befriended THIS PAST WINTER WOULD BRING THE SERPENT RING OF THOTH-AMON INTO COURT--
--AND THAT THE FOOL MALORIC WAS EMPLOYING THE DISGUISED WIZARD ALL ALONG!
NOW I MUST SERVE HIM JUST TO KEEP MY FAMILY ALIVE--
--EVEN THOUGH THEY ALL DESPISE ME--!
BOB!


TAURUS!!
WHRUM
YOU-- TRAITOR!!


I SHOULD KILL YOU!!
WHO--UGHNN!!

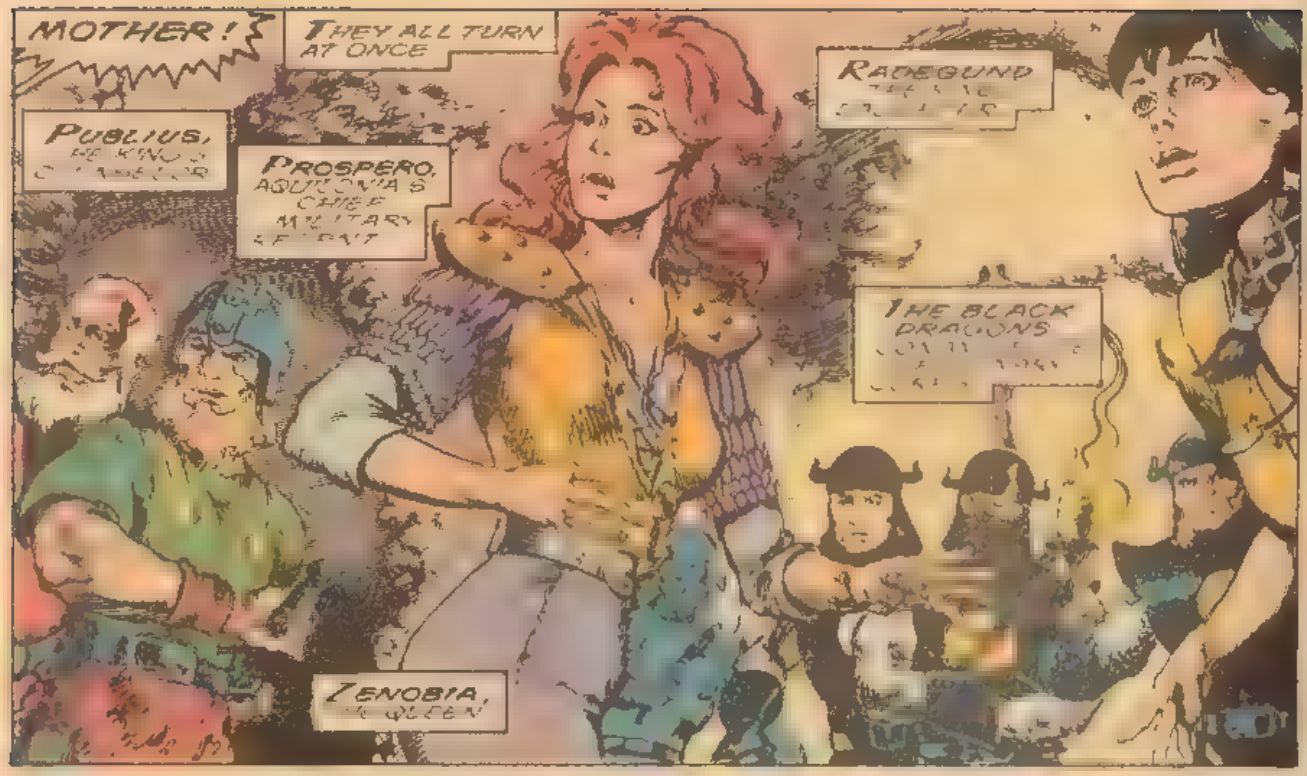
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'VE DONE?


UNHAND ME, DOLT! KNOW YE' NOT THAT I AM THE ANOINTED SERVANT OF--

--THE DEVIL HIMSELF.
WHA-- CONN?!

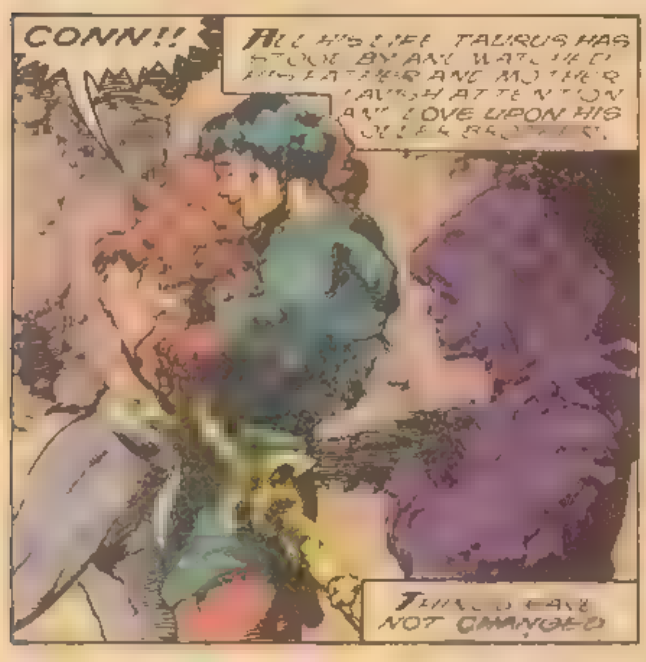
AND, IN THE THRONE ROOM...
KING.
I AM KING HERE.
HOW INCREDIBLY BORING.
THE THRILL OF CONQUEST GONE, BEING KING IS STIFLING IN ITS ROUTINE SAMENESS.
I'VE NO IDEA HOW CONAN'S MANAGED IT ALL THESE YEARS--
WHY NOT ASK ME, THOTH-AMON?
I'M BACK.

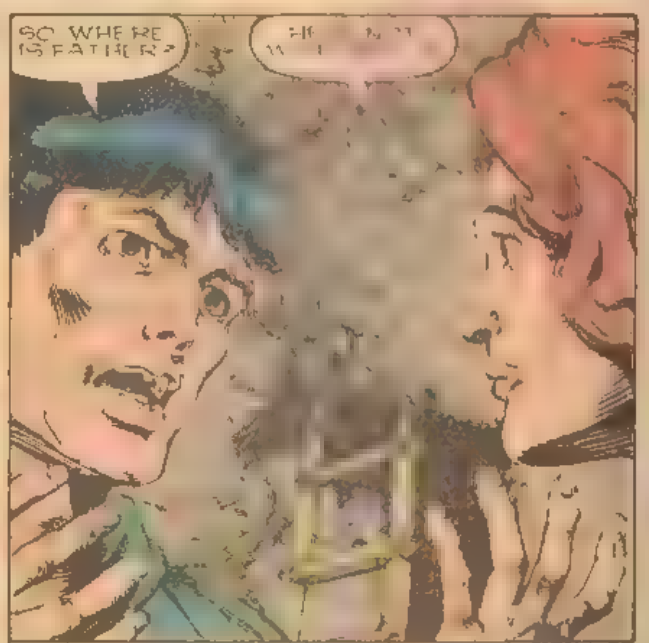
MEANWHILE...
TAURUS...
IF ANYONE SPIES YOU EATING THE KING'S CHICKEN, THE MASTER WILL FLAY YOU ALIVE.
SO? I ENJOY A GOOD FLAYING.
WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND HERE? WHAT'S BECOME OF FATHER'S LEGIONNAIRES?
TOO MUCH TO EXPLAIN, BROTHER.
BUT NOW THAT YOU'RE BACK, CONN, CAN FATHER BE FAR BEHIND?
BONK
I'VE NO IDEA WHERE FATHER IS--
THE KING'S CHICKEN--HA!
FATHER WENT OFF TO KHITAI TO FIND YOU, CONN. IF YOU'VE MADE IT HOME, SURELY HE MUST HAVE.
NOW PERHAPS THIS LONG MISERY WILL COME TO AN END--
TAURUS, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME--
NOR SHALL HE, KANG--
ULP!
TARQUIN, CAPTAIN OF THE BLACK DRAGONS!
AYE, YOU TRAITOROUS WHELP, AND I SHOULD RUN YOU THROUGH AND SPARE THE KINGDOM A MEASURE OF GRIEF.
STAY YOUR HAND, TARQUIN.
I DO NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM ILLEGITIMATE SONS, KANG SHO.
PERHAPS NOT, BUT BY MITRA, YOU'LL OBEY MY WILL, CAPTAIN.
C-CONN?!
AYE, CONN THE TRUE CROWN PRINCE NOW, CAPTAIN. I WANT SOME ANSWERS.


MOTHER!
THEY ALL TURN AT ONCE
PUBLIUS,
PROSPERO, AQUITONIA'S CHIEF MILITARY
RADEGUND
THE BLACK DRACONS
ZENOBIA,
QUEEN

THEY'D HEARD RUMORS THEY WANTED TO

CONN

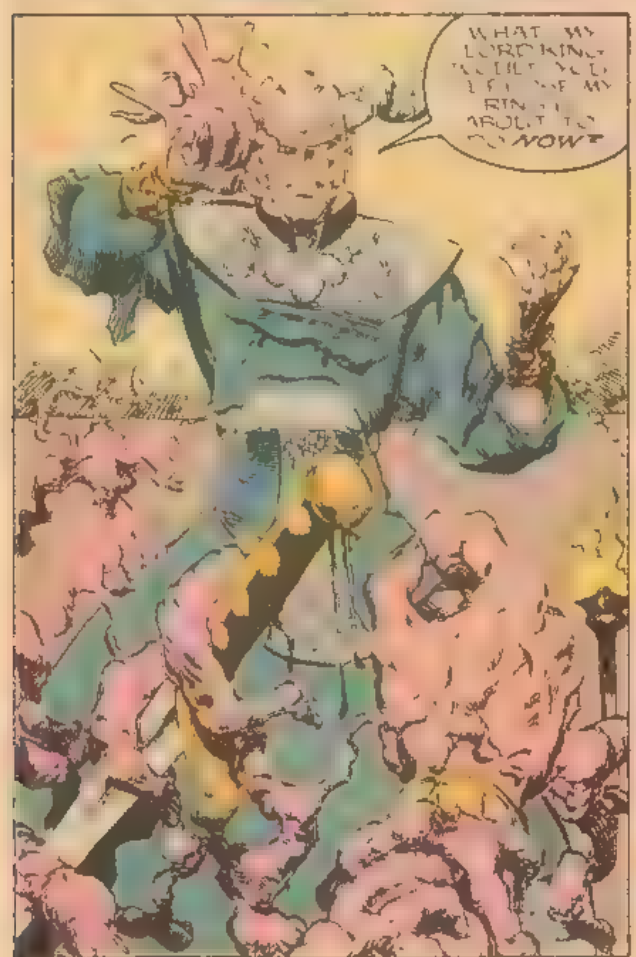

CONN!!
ALL HIS LIFE TAURUS HAS
THEIR LOVE AND MOTHER
THEIR ATTENTION
AND LOVE UPON HIS
THEY'D HEARD NOT COMMONED


SO WHERE IS FATHER?

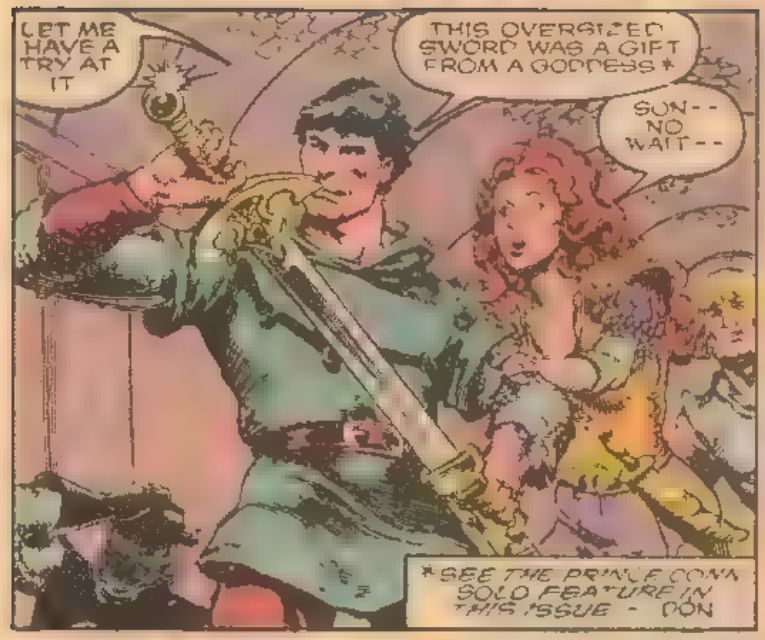
THOOM!
I BELIEVE WE'VE FOUND HIM
WELL DRAGON MUST THE KING ENGRAVE YOUR INVITATION?
YOU ARE NOT
A DUNGEON! MOTHER HAS
PUNISHMENT FOR MY HAVING
BUT I WAS ONLY TRYING TO KEEP HER ALIVE!
WHAT INDEED
I'VE
FREE

BLAST IT
I AM
IMAGINE
WE'LL JUST SEE
MOUTH NO
A HEAD

CROM!
I DO NOT HAVE TO SPEAK TO WORK MY MAGICKS DOLT-KING
MY SERPENT RING IS ALL POWERFUL IT GRANTS MY EVERY WHIM


WHAT MY LORD KING WOULD YOU HAVE OF MY RING? I AM ABOUT TO DO NOW!

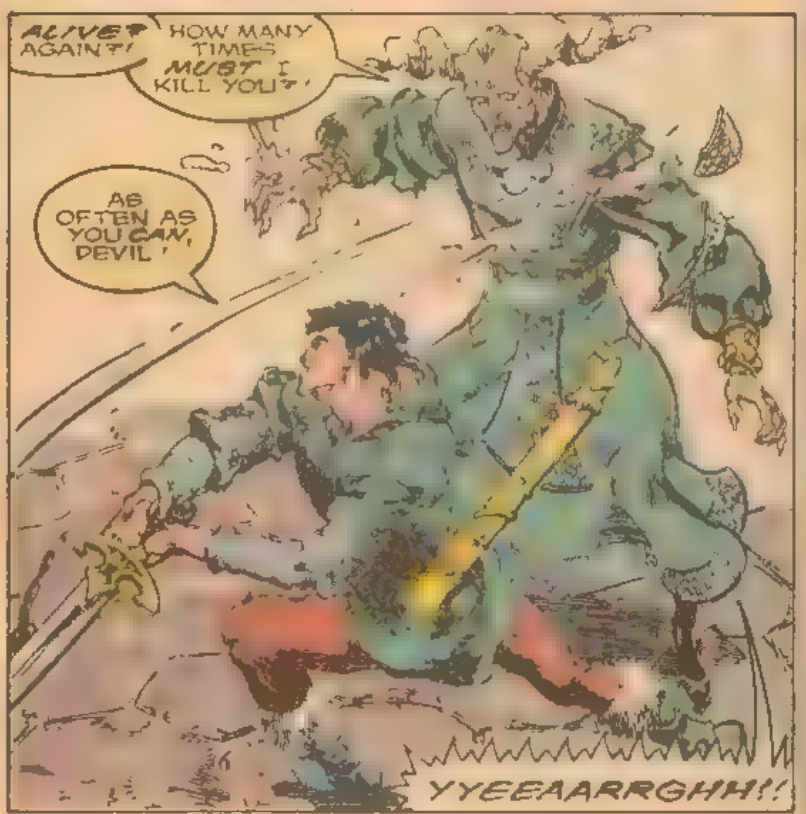
OUTSIDE THE CHAMBER
UGHNNN
I'VE ERECTED SOME MANNER OF MYSTIC BARRIER BETWEEN US AND THE DOOR!
KEEP TRYING KEPCHOE! WE MUST--


LET ME HAVE A TRY AT IT
THIS OVERSIZED SWORD WAS A GIFT FROM A GODDESS *
SON-- NO WAIT--
* SEE THE PRINCE CONN SOLO FEATURE IN THIS ISSUE - DON

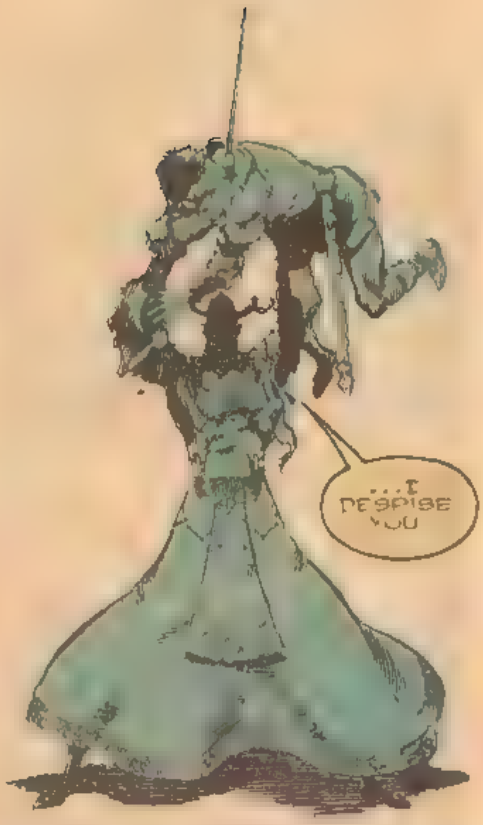
IF I WAIT, MY MOTHER FATHER WILL BE KILLED
I VE COME TOO FAR--BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH.
--I CAN T LOSE HIM NOW

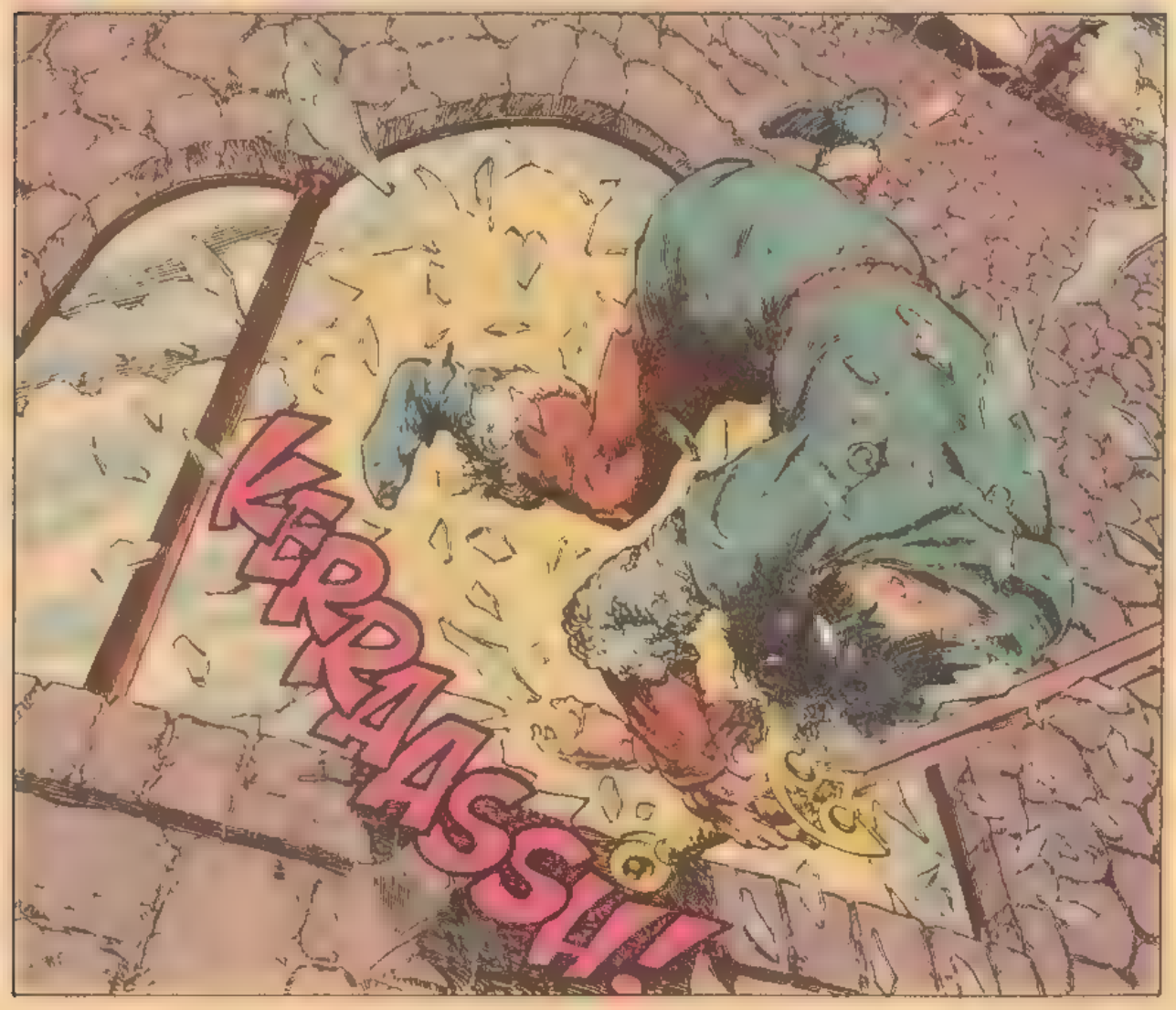
I LL SAVE MY FATHER--
--OR DIE TRYING!!
FWAAAMM!

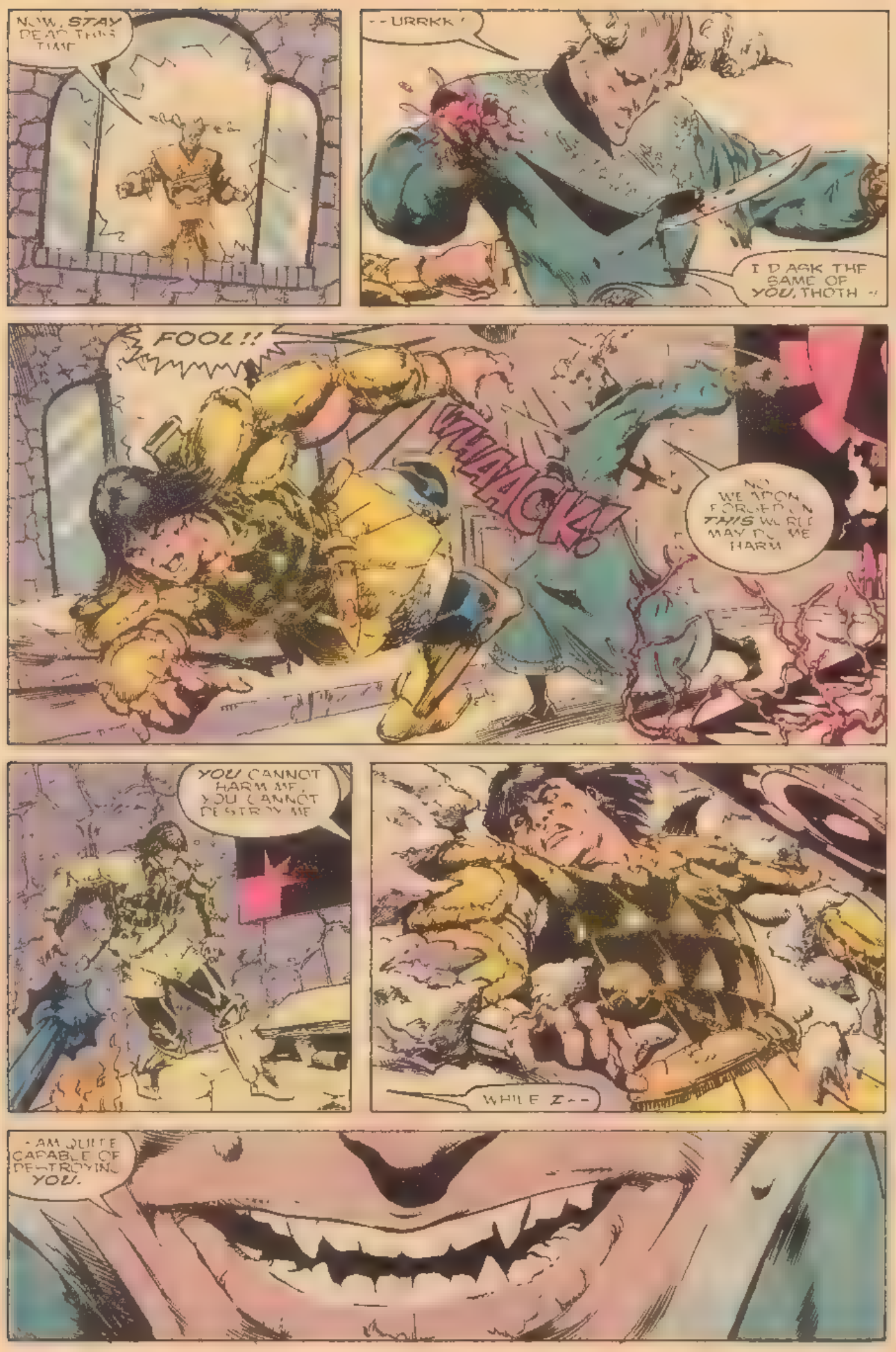
BLAST IT, TAURUS, WHAT IS IT- EH?
EYES OF SET.
--PRINCE CONN!


ALIVE? AGAIN?!
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I KILL YOU?
AS OFTEN AS YOU CAN, DEVIL!
YYEEAARRGHH!!

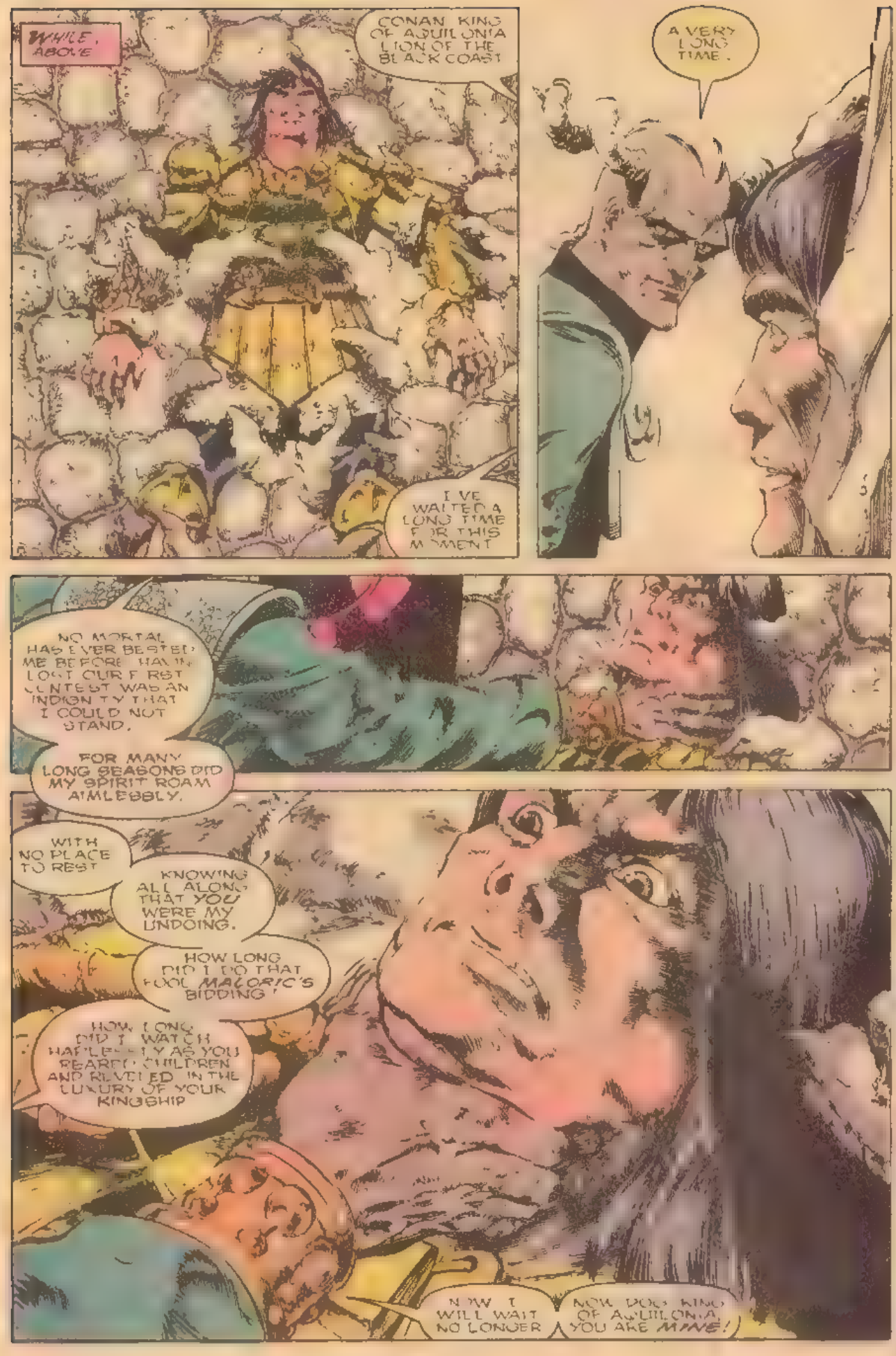
THAT WEAPON ACTUALLY HURT ME


...I DESPISE YOU


KERRAASSH!!


NOW, STAY DEAD THIS TIME
--URRKK!
I'D ASK THE SAME OF YOU, THOTH
FOOL!!
WHACK!
NO WEAPON FORGED IN THIS WORLD MAY DO ME HARM
YOU CANNOT HARM ME. YOU CANNOT DESTROY ME
WHILE I--
I AM QUITE CAPABLE OF DESTROYING YOU.

OUTSIDE
MITRA
WHY AM I NOT FALLING ?!
'TIS MY DOING O SON OF CONAN
--FOR ONLY YOURSELF CAN STAY THOTH-AMON'S HAND!
ZANDRA--THE WITCH WHO SENT ME TO KHITAI IN THE FIRST PLACE!
*CTK#24--DON
WHAT NOW, WOMAN? ARE YOU A SERVANT OF THOTH-AMON?
SHE'S MY FRIEND BROTHER
AND SHE'S COME TO HELP US
OH, THERE'S A HIGH RECOMMENDATION.
YOU SERVE THAT DEVIL
I DON'T THINK YOU OR YOUR FRIEND HAVE ANY BUSINESS--
I'VE TAKEN JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF THE BLAME FOR THIS SITUATION, CONN.
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHY I DID WHAT I DID. I HONESTLY DON'T CARE
THE TRUTH IS, YOU AND I CAN SAVE FATHER
TOGETHER


WHILE, ABOVE
CONAN KING OF AQUILONIA LION OF THE BLACK COAST
I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS MOMENT
A VERY LONG TIME.
NO MORTAL HAS EVER BESTED ME BEFORE HAVING LOST OUR FIRST CONTEST WAS AN INDIGNITY THAT I COULD NOT STAND.
FOR MANY LONG SEASONS DID MY SPIRIT ROAM AIMLESSLY.
WITH NO PLACE TO REST
KNOWING ALL ALONG THAT YOU WERE MY UNDOING.
HOW LONG DID I DO THAT FOOL MALORIC'S BIDDING!
HOW LONG DID I WATCH HAPLESSLY AS YOU REARED CHILDREN AND REVELED IN THE LUXURY OF YOUR KINGSHIP
NOW I WILL WAIT NO LONGER
NOW DOES KING OF AQUILONIA, YOU ARE MINE!

OUTSIDE
ONE OF MY DAILY DUTIES AS THOTH'S SERVANT WAS TO STOKE THE MYSTIC FLAME THAT CONSTANTLY BURNS OVER TARANTIA THE FIRE IS WHAT REKINDLES THOTH'S POWER
OVER THESE PAST SEASONS, I'VE MANAGED TO SIPHON OFF A MEASURE OF THAT POWER. I'VE USED IT MAINLY TO INSTILL DISCIPLINE IN THOTH'S PRIESTS
ZANDRA HAS FOUND A SPELL FOR QUENCHING THAT FLAME. STILL, SHE'S NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO IMPLEMENT IT
THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN
THE GIANT SWORD YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING - ZANDRA BELIEVES THE RELIC IS ACTUALLY THE FABLED SWORD OF THE ELDER GODS. FATHER ONCE WIELDED IT, I BELIEVE *
*CONAN THE BARBARIAN #200 -- DON
'TWAS THE SWORD'S POWER THAT ENABLED YOU TO PENETRATE THOTH'S MYSTIC BARRIER
CONN, IF YOU'LL RAISE IT ABOVE YOUR HEAD - AIM IT AT ZANDRA --
-- I'LL DIRECT MY OWN ENERGIES INTO THE SWORD, JOINED WITH THE POWER OF THE SWORD ITSELF AND CHANNELED INTO ZANDRA --
-- SHE SHOULD NOW BE POWERFUL ENOUGH --

--TO SNUFF OUT THE FLAME!
AND..
WHAT--?
POWER
DECIMATED
I--I CANNOT SUSTAIN THIS DARKEYES
HOLD ON, ZANDRA-- YOU MUST--!!
YOU KNOW, THEIR
I AM QUITE SICK OF THIS HAND--

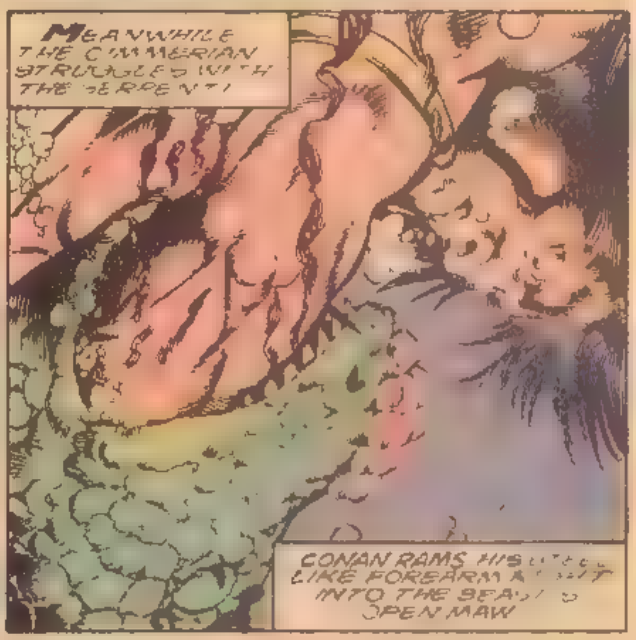
BARBARIAN!
I'VE BEEN CALLED THAT
GOOD RIDDANCE TO THE HAND AND--
--THE RING!!
MY SERPENT RING... MY POWER---
LET YOU FETCH IT TOGETHER, DEVIL
THE RING! THE RING IS ON IT!
DARK YE!
FOR THOTH-AMON'S HAND!
OWN
KREEGARE!

FATHER--BEHIND YOU!!
CONAN CANNOT HEAR TAURUS'S SHOUT.
THUS THE CIMMERIAN FALLS PREY TO ONE OF THE MANY CREATURES THOTH HAS LOOSED UPON THE CASTLE GROUNDS
VERY GOOD. MY LOVELY NOW WHERE IS MY--
OVER HERE, DEVIL!!
FANG WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?
IF YOU WANT YOUR BAUBLE BACK-- RELEASE MY FATHER!
SO. NOBLE TO THE END, EH, TAURUS?
VERY WELL, THEN
LET THERE BE AN ENDING.
SUDDENLY, THE DISMEMBERED HAND IS PLUCKED BY UNSEEN ELDRITCH FORCES
WHA--? HEY!!
HELP!!

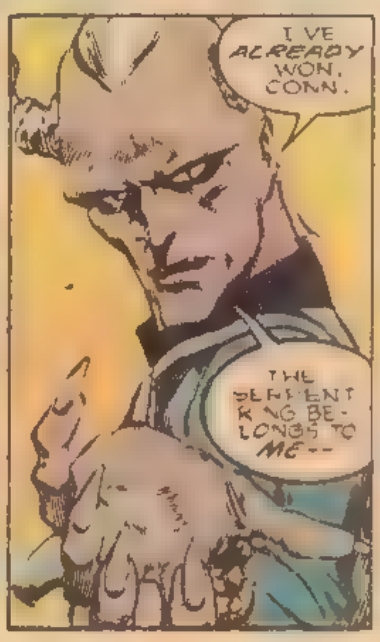
NO ONE CAN HELP YOU, PRINCE...
I OFFERED YOU POWER & GLORY...

WHILE YOUR FATHER DISDAINED YOUR VERY EXISTENCE
CONAN SHALL SURELY DIE

NO!!
AS SHALL YOU

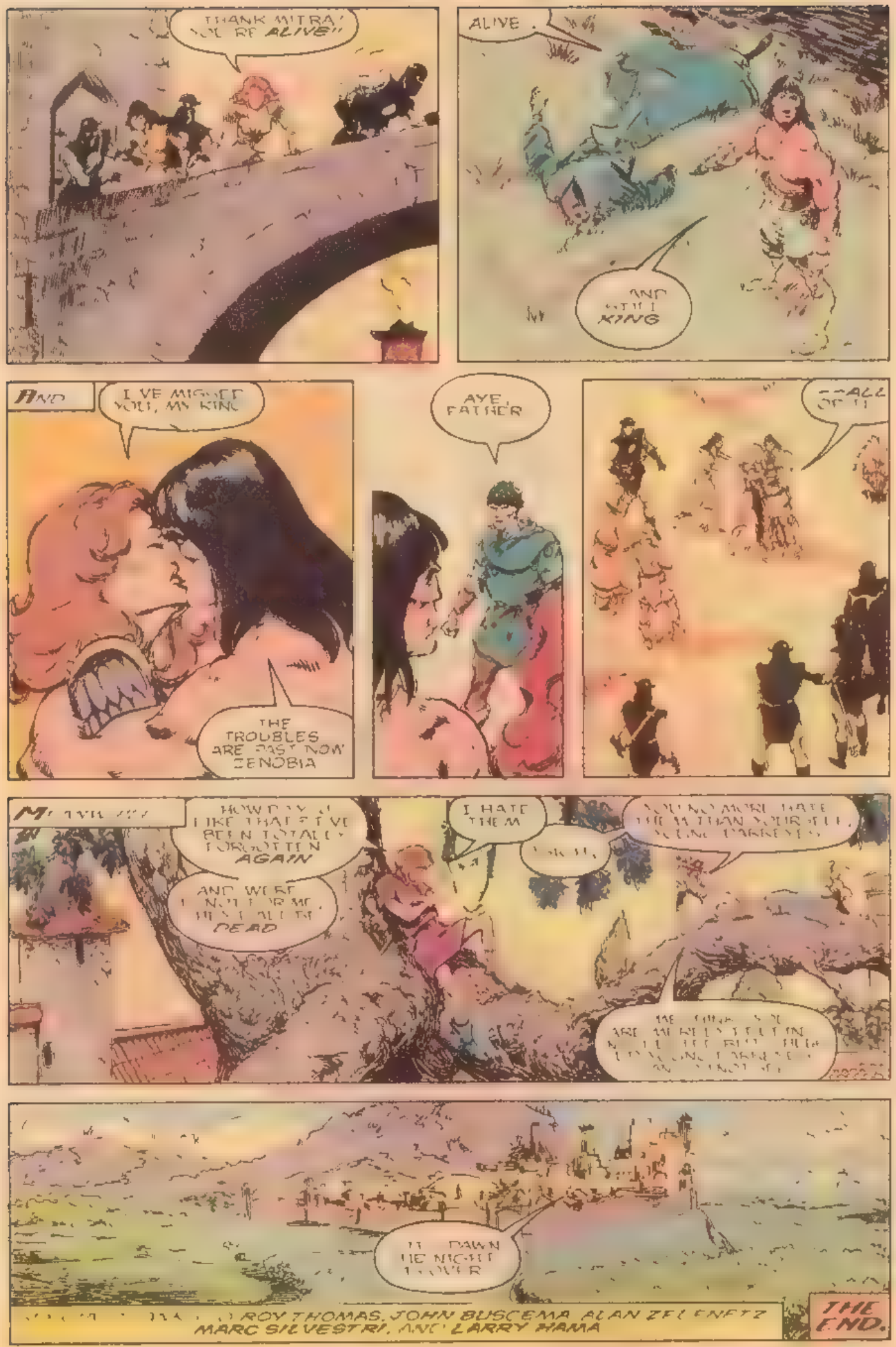

MEANWHILE THE CIMMERIAN STRUGGLES WITH THE SERPENT!
CONAN RAMS HIS [illegible] LIKE FOREARM AND SWORD INTO THE BEAST'S OPEN MAW

IT'S NO USE... THE PRINCE IS TOO STRONG...
HOLD ON, TAURUS- DON'T LET HIM WIN!


I'VE ALREADY WON, CONN.
THE SERPENT RING BELONGS TO ME--

AND I SHALL HAVE IT.

I'LL TAKE THAT
WHA-- THE BARBARIAN!! BUT-- MY SERPENT--
-- HAS MET WITH AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT! AND NOW BY CROM --
LET'S HAVE AN END TO YOU!
KRAAKK
WHAT?
WHAT AN IDIOT! WAITING FOR
CONAN!


ALIVE
AND STILL KING
AND
I'VE MISSED YOU, MY KING
THE TROUBLES ARE PAST NOW ZENOBIA
AYE, FATHER
I HATE THEM
AND WERE I NOT FOR ME, HE'D ALL BE DEAD
AT DAWN THE NIGHT
ROY THOMAS, JOHN BUSCEMA, ALAN ZELENETZ
MARC SILVESTRI, AND LARRY HAMA
THE END.

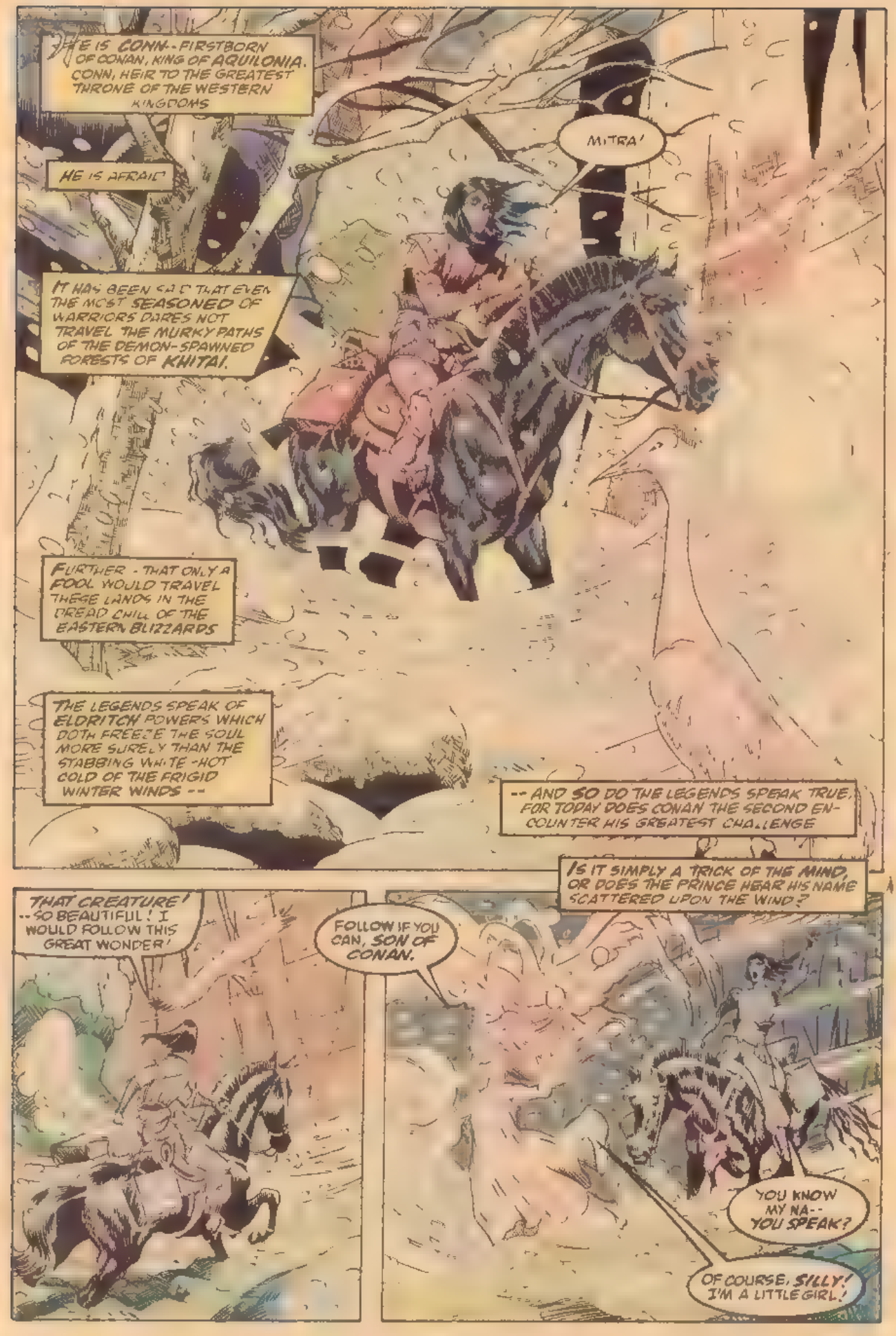
. . . And so it was darkness and winter did descend upon the age of the Barbarian King Conan.

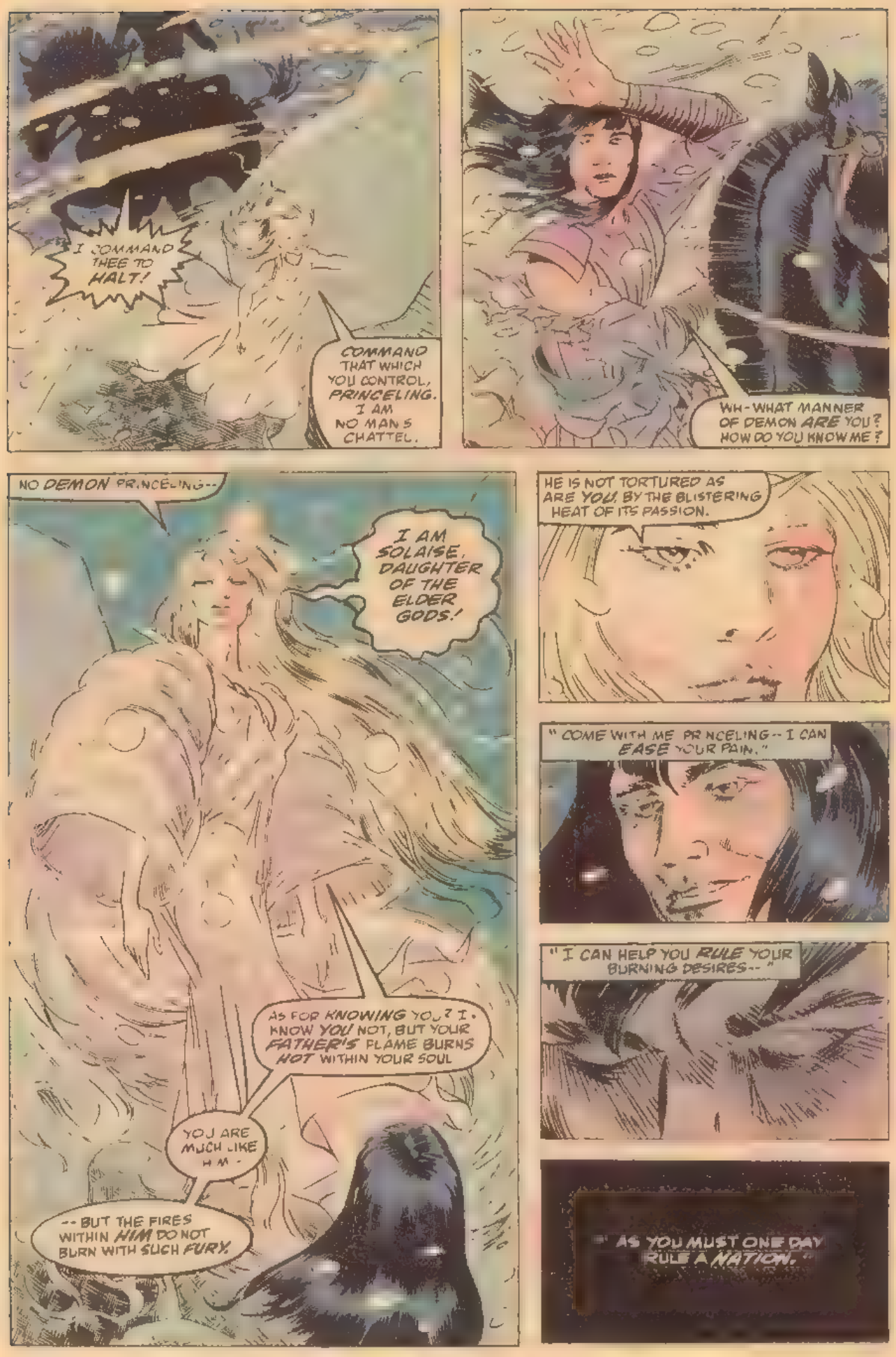
Evils both named and nameless did dwell in the very heart of his kingdom, and his warrior's heart did grow heavy with the loss of his first born, and heir, Crown Prince Conan II.

Of the strange odyssey which befell the Prince, few can say — but the priests of the land say that in times of great evil, often the gods themselves will rally to answer . . .

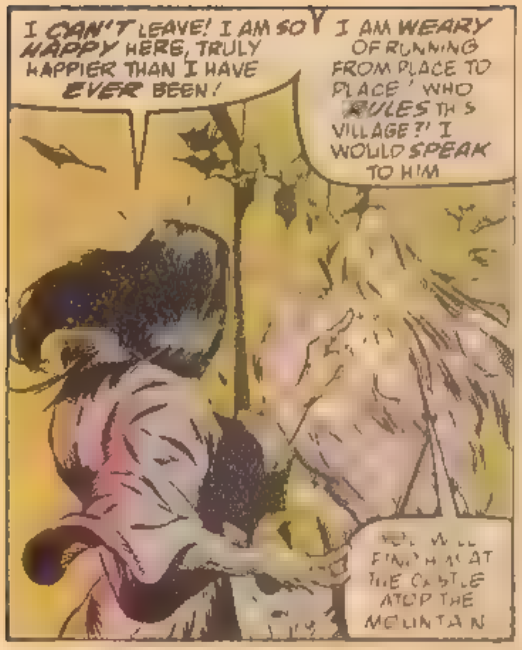
THE SWORD OF THE ELDER GODS

Written by — A.S. Blaustein
Drawn by — Dale Eaglesham
Embellished by — Pat Redding
Illuminated by — Steve Buccellato
Calligraphed by — Rick Parker
Edited by — Don Daley
Summoned forth by — Tom DeFalco


HE IS CONN--FIRSTBORN OF CONAN, KING OF AQUILONIA. CONN, HEIR TO THE GREATEST THRONE OF THE WESTERN KINGDOMS
HE IS AFRAID
MITRA!
IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT EVEN THE MOST SEASONED OF WARRIORS DARES NOT TRAVEL THE MURKY PATHS OF THE DEMON-SPAWNED FORESTS OF KHITAI.
FURTHER - THAT ONLY A FOOL WOULD TRAVEL THESE LANDS IN THE DREAD CHILL OF THE EASTERN BLIZZARDS
THE LEGENDS SPEAK OF ELDRITCH POWERS WHICH DOTH FREEZE THE SOUL MORE SURELY THAN THE STABBING WHITE-HOT COLD OF THE FRIGID WINTER WINDS --
-- AND SO DO THE LEGENDS SPEAK TRUE, FOR TODAY DOES CONAN THE SECOND ENCOUNTER HIS GREATEST CHALLENGE
IS IT SIMPLY A TRICK OF THE MIND, OR DOES THE PRINCE HEAR HIS NAME SCATTERED UPON THE WIND?
THAT CREATURE! --SO BEAUTIFUL! I WOULD FOLLOW THIS GREAT WONDER!
FOLLOW IF YOU CAN, SON OF CONAN.
YOU KNOW MY NA-- YOU SPEAK?
OF COURSE, SILLY! I'M A LITTLE GIRL!

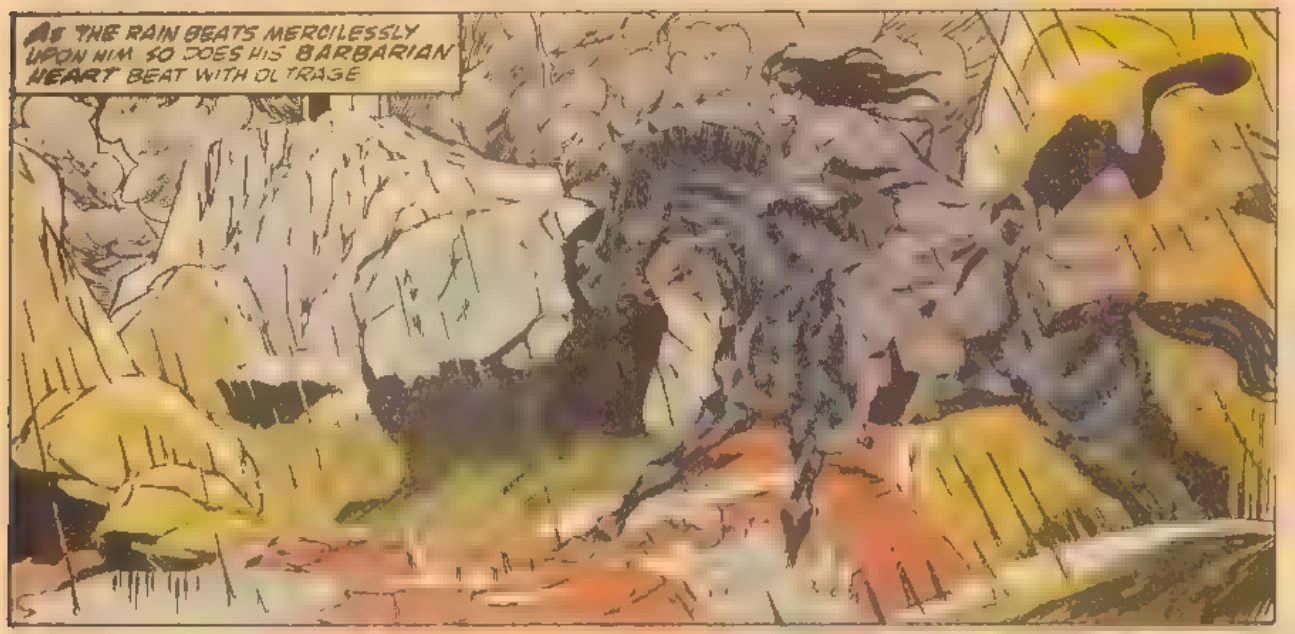

I COMMAND THEE TO HALT!
COMMAND THAT WHICH YOU CONTROL, PRINCELING. I AM NO MAN'S CHATTEL.
WH-WHAT MANNER OF DEMON ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?
NO DEMON PRINCELING--
I AM SOLAISE, DAUGHTER OF THE ELDER GODS!
AS FOR KNOWING YOU? I. KNOW YOU NOT, BUT YOUR FATHER'S FLAME BURNS HOT WITHIN YOUR SOUL
YOU ARE MUCH LIKE HIM.
-- BUT THE FIRES WITHIN HIM DO NOT BURN WITH SUCH FURY.
HE IS NOT TORTURED AS ARE YOU, BY THE BLISTERING HEAT OF ITS PASSION.
"COME WITH ME PRINCELING -- I CAN EASE YOUR PAIN."
"I CAN HELP YOU RULE YOUR BURNING DESIRES--"
"AS YOU MUST ONE DAY RULE A NATION."

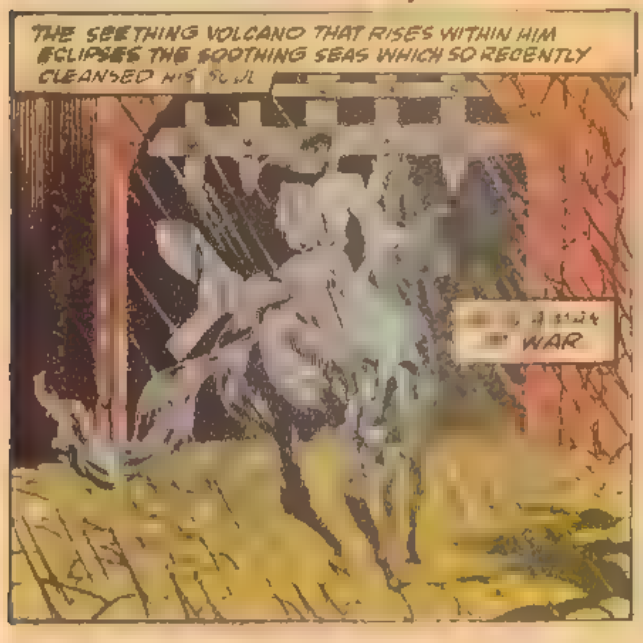
WHAT IS REALITY? A DREAM WAKING -- A WORLD ALONE, CREATED FOR OURSELVES BY US ALONE -- A KINGDOM POISED UPON THE EDGE OF A SWORD.
OF LI-CHAANDRA, MANY MOONS LATER
GOOD MORNING, PRINCELING. I SEE YOU ARE BUSY WITH YOUR PAINTING. THE GARDEN IS BEAUTIFUL, IS IT NOT?
EH? YES. BEAUTIFUL
YOU KNOW... IT IS FUNNY... AS A YOUNG BOY, I ENJOYED THE ARTS, BUT WHEN I CAME OF AGE, I LOST MY WAY. I STUDIED THE ARTS OF WAR.
MY FATHER THOUGHT PAINTING TO BE UNMANLY. I THOUGHT IT TO BE UNMANLY
THANK YOU, SOLAISE. I FEEL SO AT PEACE. I WISH THE WORLD OUTSIDE THIS VILLAGE COULD KNOW SUCH PEACE
YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL SOUL, PRINCELING! IT HAS BEEN EASY FOR YOU TO FIND PEACE HERE
IT IS A PEACE WHICH YOU YOURSELF HAVE BROUGHT
IT IS A GOOD PAINTING. CONN THE BRIGHTNESS OF YOUR VISION IS A GIFT FROM THE GODS THEMSELVES.
WHAT FIGURE DO YOU PLACE IN THE GARDEN?
I'M NOT SURE. IT SHALL COME TO ME, THOUGH. I AM IN NO RUSH. I HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.
NO, YOU DON'T.
I AM SORRY, PRINCELING, BUT THE TIME OF YOUR LEAVING THIS VILLAGE DRAWS NIGH. YOU MUST FINISH YOUR PAINTING AND WHEN YOU DO YOU MUST LEAVE.
WHAT?!!


I CAN'T LEAVE! I AM SO HAPPY HERE, TRULY HAPPIER THAN I HAVE EVER BEEN!
I AM WEARY OF RUNNING FROM PLACE TO PLACE! WHO RULES THIS VILLAGE?! I WOULD SPEAK TO HIM
I'LL FIND HIM AT THE CASTLE ATOP THE MOUNTAIN

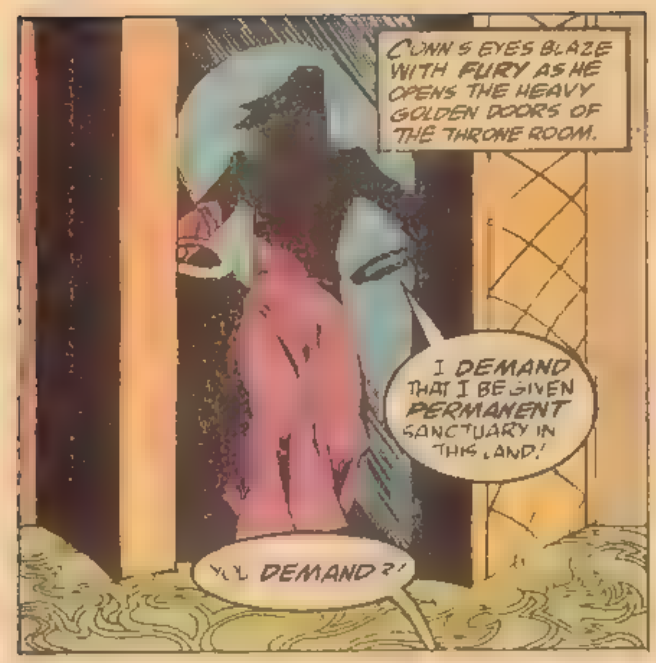
"-- BUT BE CAREFUL SON OF CONAN-- THAT YOUR RAGE IS NOT YOUR UNDOING.

JUST AS THE ONCE-[illegible] PRINCE [illegible] RAGE SO DOES THE LAND THUNDER WITH FURY. THE PRINCE RIDES -HE WOULD BE AT PEACE AGAIN.


AS THE RAIN BEATS MERCILESSLY UPON HIM SO DOES HIS BARBARIAN HEART BEAT WITH OUTRAGE

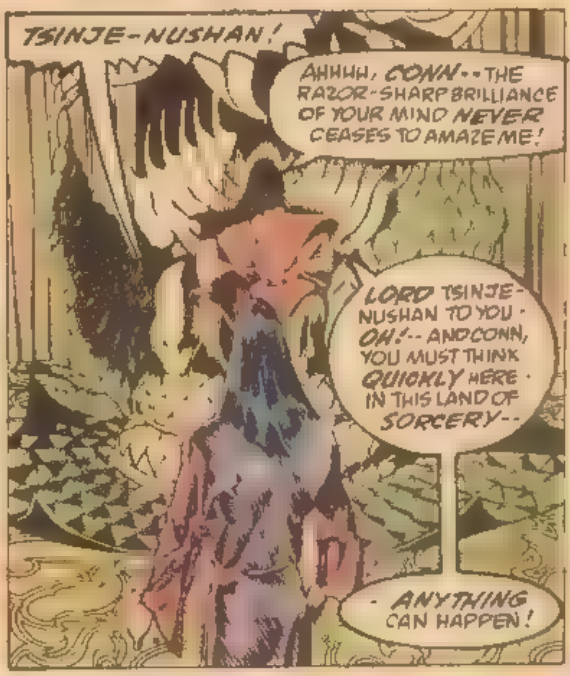

THE SEETHING VOLCANO THAT RISES WITHIN HIM ECLIPSES THE SOOTHING SEAS WHICH SO RECENTLY CLEANSED HIS SOUL
[illegible] WAR

WHO RULES THIS VILLAGE?! I WOULD SPEAK WITH THEE--
NOW!


CONN'S EYES BLAZE WITH FURY AS HE OPENS THE HEAVY GOLDEN DOORS OF THE THRONE ROOM.
I DEMAND THAT I BE GIVEN PERMANENT SANCTUARY IN THIS LAND!
Y'L DEMAND?!

MITRA

MUST YOU ALWAYS MOUTH THE NAME OF YOUR PATHETIC BARBARIAN GOD?
IT IS USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY THE MOST TEDIOUS, SLACK-JAWED, INFANTILE EXPRESSION I HAVE EVER SEEN.
WELCOME TO MY CASTLE, SON OF CONA


TSINJE-NUSHAN!
AHHHH, CONN--THE RAZOR-SHARP BRILLIANCE OF YOUR MIND NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME!
LORD TSINJE-NUSHAN TO YOU--OH!--AND CONN, YOU MUST THINK QUICKLY HERE IN THIS LAND OF SORCERY--
--ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

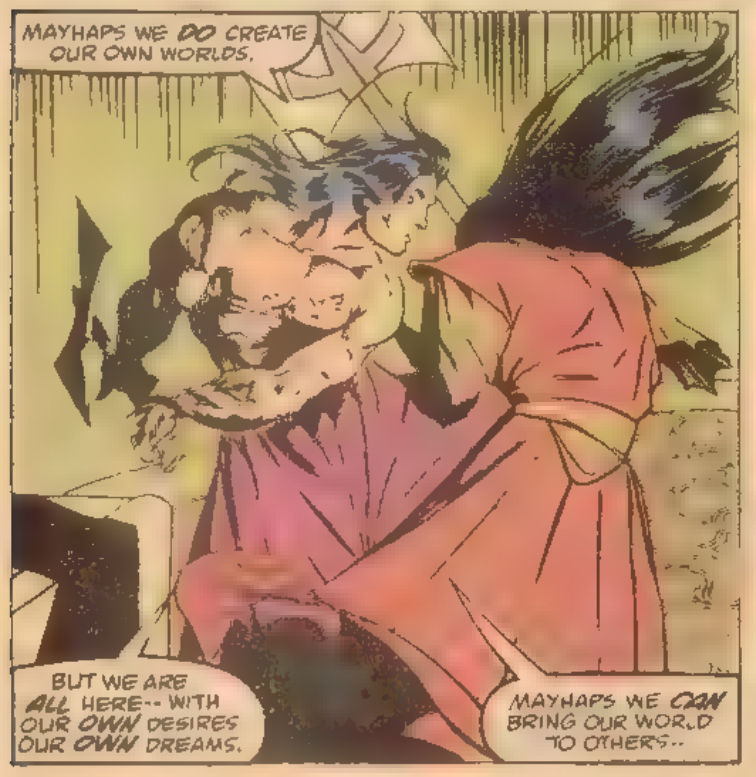
EH? THIS AXE--B-BUT HOW?
CHAK

DOES IT MATTER? HAVEN'T YOU BEEN WAITING TO KILL ME? HASN'T YOUR DARK SOUL LONGED TO TASTE MY BLOOD?
BAH!
YOU SPEAK OF THE DARKNESS OF MY SOUL?!
YOU MURDERED THOSE POOR VILLAGERS YOU SWORE TO PROTECT!
I MADE NO SUCH OATHS LEAST OF ALL TO PROTECT THAT GAGGLE OF LOST SOULS!
THEY WERE WEAK! IT WAS THEIR TIME TO DIE! THEY FLED FROM THE LORD GENJIS, BECAUSE HE HAD POWER!
THOSE IN POWER ARE IN THE RIGHT! I ONLY SOUGHT POWER OF MY OWN!
I WAS BORN WITH SUCH POWER -- TO A FATHER WHOSE DARK SOUL IS AS BLACK AS YOUR OWN!
I REJECT SUCH POWER - NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO SHAPE A WORLD TO HIS OWN LIKING.
EVERY MAN HAS THAT RIGHT! EVERY MAN DOES JUST THAT!
DO YOU THINK THIS WORLD IS NOT OF YOUR OWN CREATION?
YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES

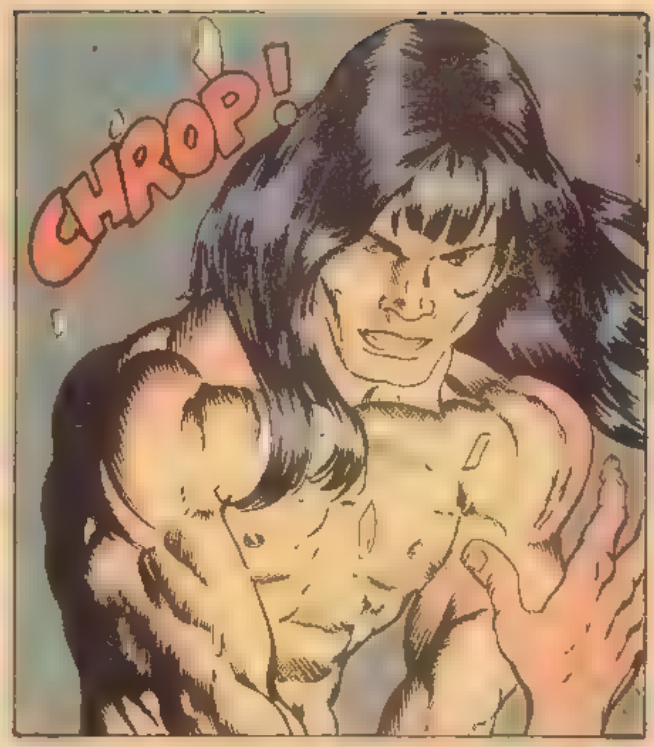
KA WAAK
I SPEAK THE TRUTH, FOOL!
THIS IS MY WORLD, AND YOU ARE HERE SO THAT I MAY KILL YOU--

--FOR MY PLEASURE!

MAYHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT, TSINJE

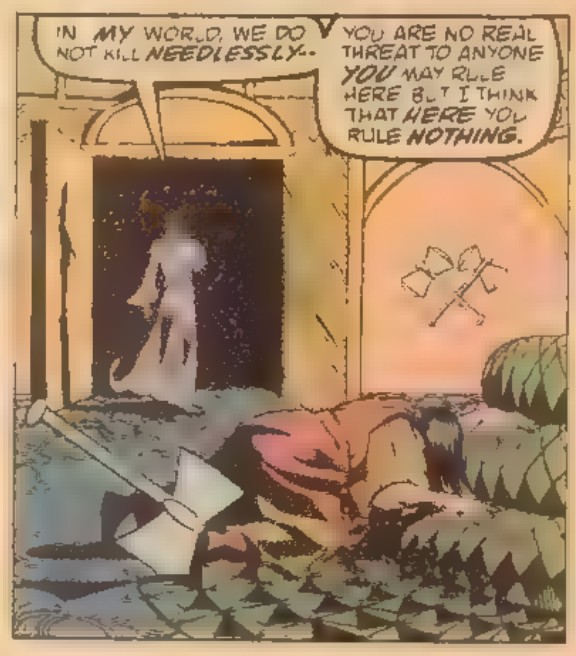

MAYHAPS WE DO CREATE OUR OWN WORLDS.
BUT WE ARE ALL HERE-- WITH OUR OWN DESIRES OUR OWN DREAMS.
MAYHAPS WE CAN BRING OUR WORLD TO OTHERS--

--I ONLY KNOW THAT MY WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE, AND IN IT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR YOUR KIND


CHROP!

EH?

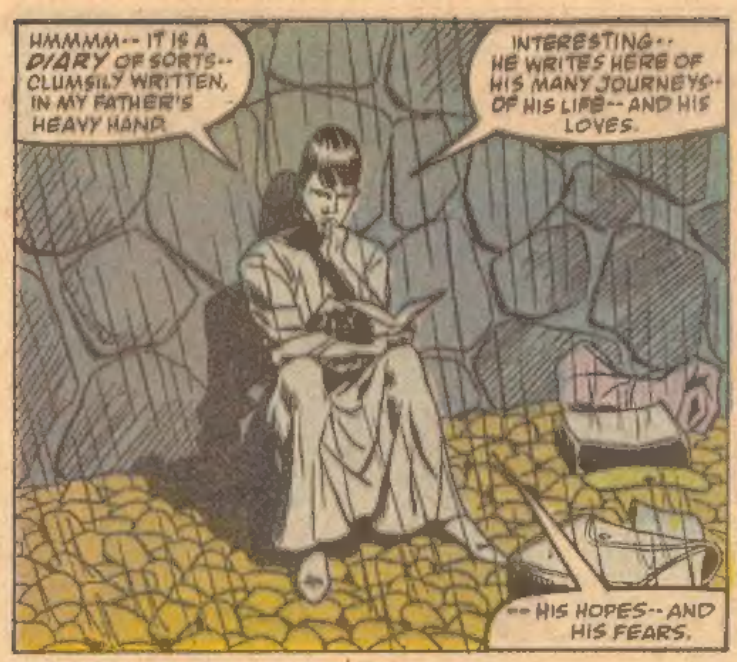
DO NOT BE SURPRISED, LORD TA NJE N. SHAN


IN MY WORLD, WE DO NOT KILL NEEDLESSLY..
YOU ARE NO REAL THREAT TO ANYONE YOU MAY RULE HERE BUT I THINK THAT HERE YOU RULE NOTHING.

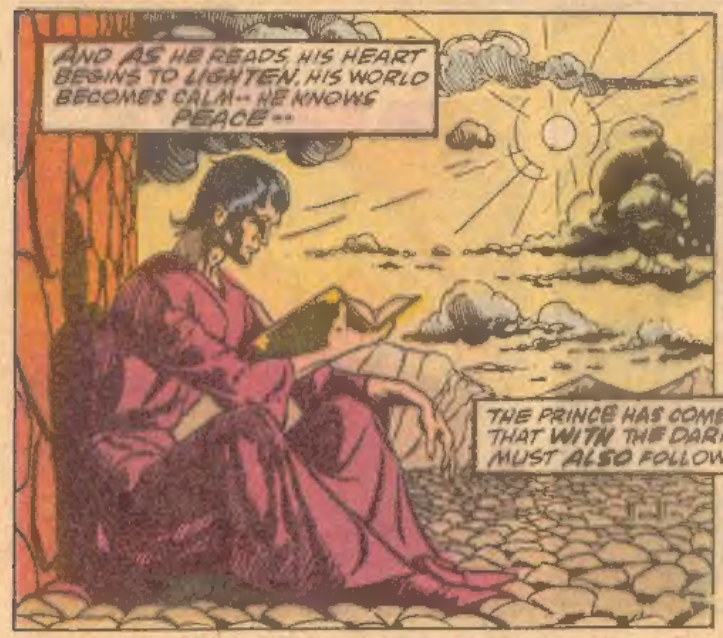
YOUR KNOWN IS NOUGHT BUT A FROMY WRAPPED

I HAVE TAKEN THIS VILLAGE FOR REALITY, NOBLE BEAST-- BUT I FEAR THAT I'M CAUGHT IN SOME SORCEROUS WEB FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE--
MAYHAPS ALL MY LIFE HAS BEEN AN ILLUSION- A MERE DREAM. WOULD THAT I COULD AWAKEN FROM THIS NIGHTMARE, AND DRINK DEEP THE WATERS OF REALITY
--BUT STILL THERE LIES A BLOCK IN MY PATH--
A DEMON STILL HAS TO BE PURGED IF ONLY THE GODS WOULD GRANT ME A SIGN!
THAT FACE! THAT GRIM COUNTENANCE FORMING FROM THE VERY STORM CLOUDS
NO!
BEGONE, FATHER! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?!
SHOULD I PLUNGE THIS COOLING DAGGER INTO MY BREAST TO QUENCH THE RAGING INFERNO THAT IS YOUR LEGACY?!!
I SAY THEE NAY!
I WILL LIVE, FATHER! BUT I WILL NO LONGER BE YOUR DOPPEL GANGER YOUR DARK DOUBLE, THE MIRROR OF YOUR MOST DESTRUCTIVE SELF!
I WILL DRIVE FROM MY WORLD ALL TRACES OF YOUR BRUTE SAVAGERY!

HAH! YOUR PRIZED BEAST! BRED FOR WAR HIS STURDY CONSTITUTION COULD CARRY ME ACROSS THE ENTIRE CONTINENT-- TO AQUILONIA ITSELF!
HOW I LONGED AS A BOY TO RIDE IN ITS SADDLE, LONGED TO BECOME KING CONAN.
YOUR GAZE IS A STERN ONE. HORSE THE STEEL GAZE OF A WARRIOR!
SO MUCH LIKE MY FATHER'S--
SO MUCH LIKE MY OWN.
WHO AM I FOOLING? MY FATHER'S DARK SOUL LIVES YET WITHIN ME - EH?
THAT BOOK?
IT IS A JOURNAL OF SOME KIND--
AS A CHILD I'D OFTEN SEEN MY FATHER WITH IT.
M'TRA

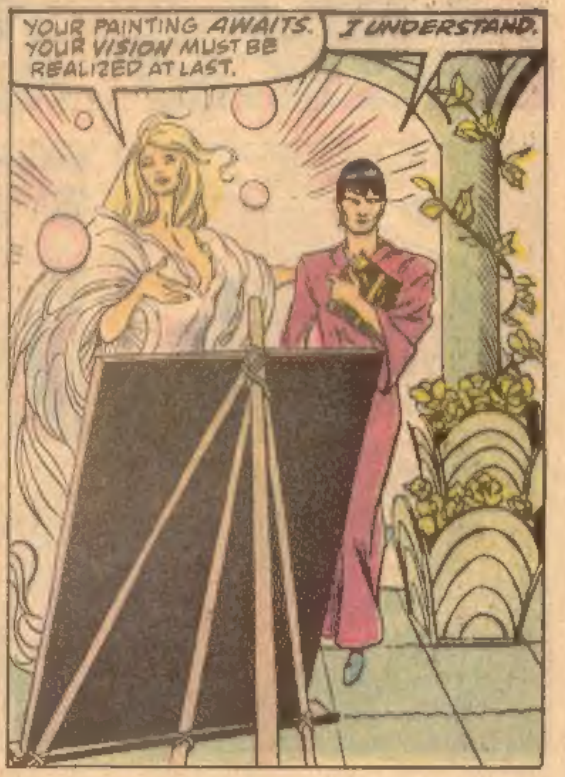

HMMMM-- IT IS A DIARY OF SORTS-- CLUMSILY WRITTEN, IN MY FATHER'S HEAVY HAND.
INTERESTING-- HE WRITES HERE OF HIS MANY JOURNEYS-- OF HIS LIFE-- AND HIS LOVES.
-- HIS HOPES-- AND HIS FEARS.

THE PRINCE READS...

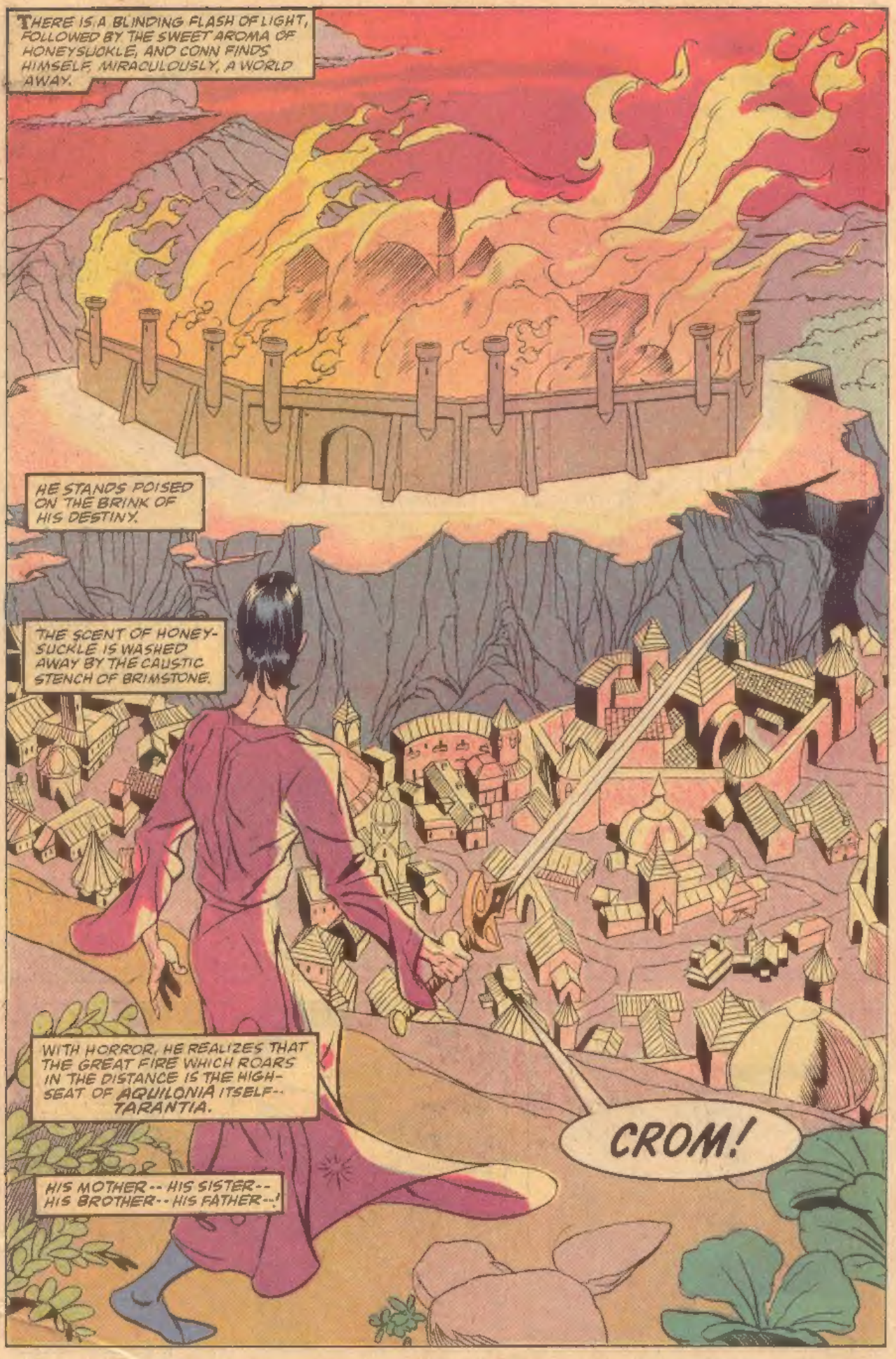

AND AS HE READS HIS HEART BEGINS TO LIGHTEN, HIS WORLD BECOMES CALM-- HE KNOWS PEACE--
THE PRINCE HAS COME TO KNOW THAT WITH THE DARKNESS, SO MUST ALSO FOLLOW THE LIGHT.

AS MUCH AS HE IS LIKE HIS FATHER-- SO IS HIS FATHER MUCH LIKE HIM.

GOOD MORNING, CONN. IT IS TIME.


YOUR PAINTING AWAITS. YOUR VISION MUST BE REALIZED AT LAST.
I UNDERSTAND.

THE PRINCE ATTACKS THE CANVAS, HIS BRUSH DANCING LIKE A SWORD.
IT IS A SUBLIME MOMENT FOR THE PRINCE -- A CRYSTALLIZATION OF HIS DREAMS--
-- A RECOGNITION OF HIS DESTINY.
MY WORK HERE IS ALMOST AT AN END! IT IS TIME, MY PRINCELING, FOR YOU TO ONCE AGAIN TRADE BRUSH FOR SWORD.
"THE SWORD OF THE ELDER GODS!"
USE IT WISELY. WITH IT YOU MAY YET PAINT THE WORLD TO YOUR VISION OF BEAUTY AND PEACE.
BUT KNOW THAT SUCH POWER IS OFT TIMES PAINFUL.
"LIKE THE BURNING ELDRITCH FIRES WHICH SURROUND THE SWORD, YOU MAY NEED TO CALL UPON YOUR OWN CIMMERIAN FIRE TO SURROUND YOU."
"THAT FIRE SHALL BE YOUR ARMOR."
IT BURNS--
MUST KINGSHIP BE SO PAINFUL--?
"YES."


THERE IS A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT, FOLLOWED BY THE SWEET AROMA OF HONEYSUCKLE, AND CONN FINDS HIMSELF, MIRACULOUSLY, A WORLD AWAY.
HE STANDS POISED ON THE BRINK OF HIS DESTINY.
THE SCENT OF HONEY-SUCKLE IS WASHED AWAY BY THE CAUSTIC STENCH OF BRIMSTONE.
WITH HORROR, HE REALIZES THAT THE GREAT FIRE WHICH ROARS IN THE DISTANCE IS THE HIGH-SEAT OF AQUILONIA ITSELF-- TARANTIA.
CROM!
HIS MOTHER -- HIS SISTER -- HIS BROTHER -- HIS FATHER --!

Bullpen Bulletins

Quote of the Month

"I don't care how strong he is--six tons of wheat ought to hold him for a while."

--Captain Marvel
CAPTAIN MARVEL SPECIAL #1

Stan's Soapbox

Hi True Believers!

Y' know , for the past few months I've been hitting a few comic book conventions all over the country (and don't be a wisenheimer and ask me if they hit back!). Now I'd like to share a few thoughts with you, thoughts that occured to me at those wild and wonderful gatherings.

First of all, if any of you have the idea that comic book conventions are primarily for kids, forget it! The nature and character of the attendees is a never-ending source of pride to me. I mean we're talking young adults, teenagers, college students, professional people, parents of all ages joining in the fun with their youngsters, and assorted literature and art lovers of every race, sex and nationality. Whenever I'm lucky enough to mingle with the great gang of comicbookpersons and their fans, I can't help but think how wonderful it would be if all of life could be like a comic con. Just think--no hassles, no hang ups, no bitterness, bigotry or bull dung. Just a bunch of happy humans, meeting on common ground, sharing a common passion, each finding something in these amazing publications, in the comic books they read and enjoy , something to excite them, to provoke them, to transport them away from their everyday problems, to replace the humdrum elements in their lives with the dazzling color and brilliance of fantasy!

No matter how harried and hapless we may be in our own workaday world, for one brief interval of time, a love for comic books brings us together and allows us to savor a world of imagery and romance, a world that we can share through the miracle of the printed page!

Y'know something? I love comics!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM: Friday, April 14 was the date of the second annual Mighty Marvel T-shirt Swapathon, and what a spectacle it was! Emceed by Fabulous *Fabian Nicieza*, the Swapathon pitted our ever-competitive Marvel staffers against each other in grueling, winner-take-T-shirt contests.

Memorable moments included Assistant Editor *Renee Witterstaetter's* heartful rendition of "I'm a Little Teapot," Reproduction Department Administrator *Francine Burke's* convincing impression of Editor In Chief *Tom DeFalco*, Submissions Editor *Evan Skolnick* knocking an apple off Executive Editor *Mark Gruenwald's* head with a rubber frisbee, Editor *Howard Mackie's* bellybutton lint, bullpenner *Harry Eisenstein's* wailing imitation of Traffic Manager *Virginia Romita*, and Assistant Editor *Jim DiGiovanna's* brutal stare-down of fellow Assistant Editor *Sara Tuchinsky*!

Fun--as well as pizza--was had by all who participated. Sure, there were a few embarrassing moments...but at least no one *videotaped* the bizarre proceedings. As far as we know, anyway...

ITEM: Crafty *Carl Potts*, editor of such titles as THE PUNISHER, ALPHA FLIGHT and POWER PACK, gave up his days of bachelorhood April 22, and married Cunning *Cathleen Meloni* in Westchester, New York. Even as we speak the blissful newlyweds are honeymooning in our fiftieth state, Hawaii. Congrats to Carl and Cathy from Marvelites everywhere!

Fan Fare

Margaret Clark

Editor on: AKIRA, ALIEN LEGION, HAVOK AND WOLVERINE, ELSEWHERE PRINCE, STAR WARS, Moebius' BLUEBERRY Graphic Novels, ELEKTRA: ACT OF LOVE

Marvel freelance credits (past): DOOFENDERS OF THE EARTH, WATER CLOSET AVENGERS, SOLO AVENGERS STARRING DR. DOPEY, DOCTOR ZERO, ST. GEORGE, POWERLINE

Marvel freelance credits (present): CRITCAL MASS

My place of birth is: In the dark. The hospital I was born in lost their lights during a thunderstorm.

People who knew me in high school thought I was: One of the meanest people alive.

My hobbies are: Circling want ads in the *New York Times*.

My pet peeves are: I'm not allowed to have pets in my building.

My favorite performers are: *Mike Rockwitz*, Tiffany, Penn and Teller.

The last good book I read was: *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves.

The last good movie I saw was: The trailers before *Pet Sematary*.

If they were making a movie of my life, I'd like to see my part played by: Lily Tomlin, as suggested by *Adam Blumstein*.

My oddest habit is: Screaming at the top of my lungs, "It's comics , not brain surgery!"

My greatest accomplishment outside the comics field is: Taunting *John Wellington* to go off the *high* water slide at Action Park.

The reason I got into comics was: 1982.

The biggest influences on my work include: Stephen Hawkins, the clock and space.

The single work of which I am most proud is: That I finally filled out this stinking form for Evan..

My greatest unfulfilled ambition in the comics field is: I didn't realize I was in a field, oh yeah, look at the cow....

The worst part of my job is: Why gosh! There's no *one* worst part of my job.

When nobody's looking I like to: Dangle the Antioch intern out the 10th floor window by her ankles.

The one thing I really want the world to know about me is: "They" were right in high school